

PENTHOUSE

MAY/JUNE 2017

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ON LOCATION
IN MEXICO

THE QUANTUM
REVOLUTION
IS HERE

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WE BAN
THE BURKA?

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LO-TECH
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FROM THE EDITOR

I look up from my phone and notice it has become dark. I could've sworn it was still light - at least it was when I first started flicking through my Facebook feed, then Instagram. Then I think I started reading something... I can't remember? Anyway, with all the flicking I had forgotten I had something in the oven and dinner was burnt. I guess I'll just go back to flicking.

Once upon a time the iPhone was just a crazy idea too big to be realised in the head of a man. Now it's in the pocket of every man and woman and child on the planet. Well, almost - there are currently over 1 billion active Apple devices on planet earth. Not bad for an idea.

The iPhone feels like it's been around forever, but the first model was released in 2007. Now most people can't imagine their life without it. For better or worse, it's an extension of their body, a permanent fixture that provides a lens to view the world through. In no particular order, we use it to navigate, communicate, meditate and masturbate.

Humans are slowly integrating with technology.

Did you know that we're about to see the fourth radical shift in computing? First personal computing, then the web, then that shiny thing in your pocket, and now artificial intelligence. The robots are coming. Don't believe me? Read THE REPORT. Is our future as mistake-prone humans looking bleak, or will you welcome our new robot overlords?

But enough about that technology stuff. Who cares right? Take a step outside and smell the roses, or, in the case of our FEATURE on page 52, the poppies. PENTHOUSE goes inside the remote mountain villages of western Guerrero to take a look first hand at the most successful illicit narcotics organisation in history.

As always, there's that and heaps more. If you've read this far, well done. If you haven't already, buy the mag, take it home, crack a cold one, sit back and relax. And then drop me an email and let me know what you think.

As always, enjoy. 'Cause it's all about the stories, right?

NATHAN HARMOND

Editor

Nathan@phpublications.com



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SHOOT TO THRILL



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PENTHOUSE

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A visual journey through one of the world's most intriguing nations

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CHARITY GALA NIGHT

Braving the rain some of Sydney's sexiest people turned out for a great cause. Penthouse and Scuderia Graziani hosted a charity event to raise funds and awareness for bowel cancer via The Jodi Lee Foundation. With thanks to sponsors TenX, Tomich Hill Wines, The Elite Matchmaker Agency, Select Diamonds and Watches, Charles Billich, Roxy Brewery and Man Cave.

Guests spent the evening sampling fine wine and food, surrounded by stunning luxury vehicles. It was a great way to get out of the rain and enjoy some of the finer things in life. And all for a good cause.

Photos by @_thinkdirty_





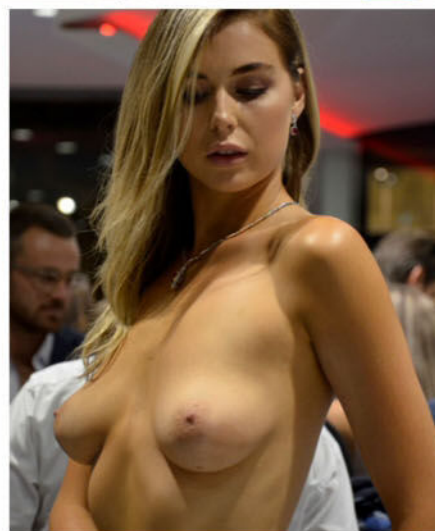
2015



LIVE ART

World renowned artist, Charles Billich sketched Penthouse covergirl Paige Marie Evans, wearing diamonds and rubies from Select Diamonds & Watches, and silks from Silviya Neri. Charles donated the piece to our Silent Auction on the night, with all proceeds donated to The Jodi Lee Foundation.

Hair by Toni and Guy, Make up by Prue Roberts



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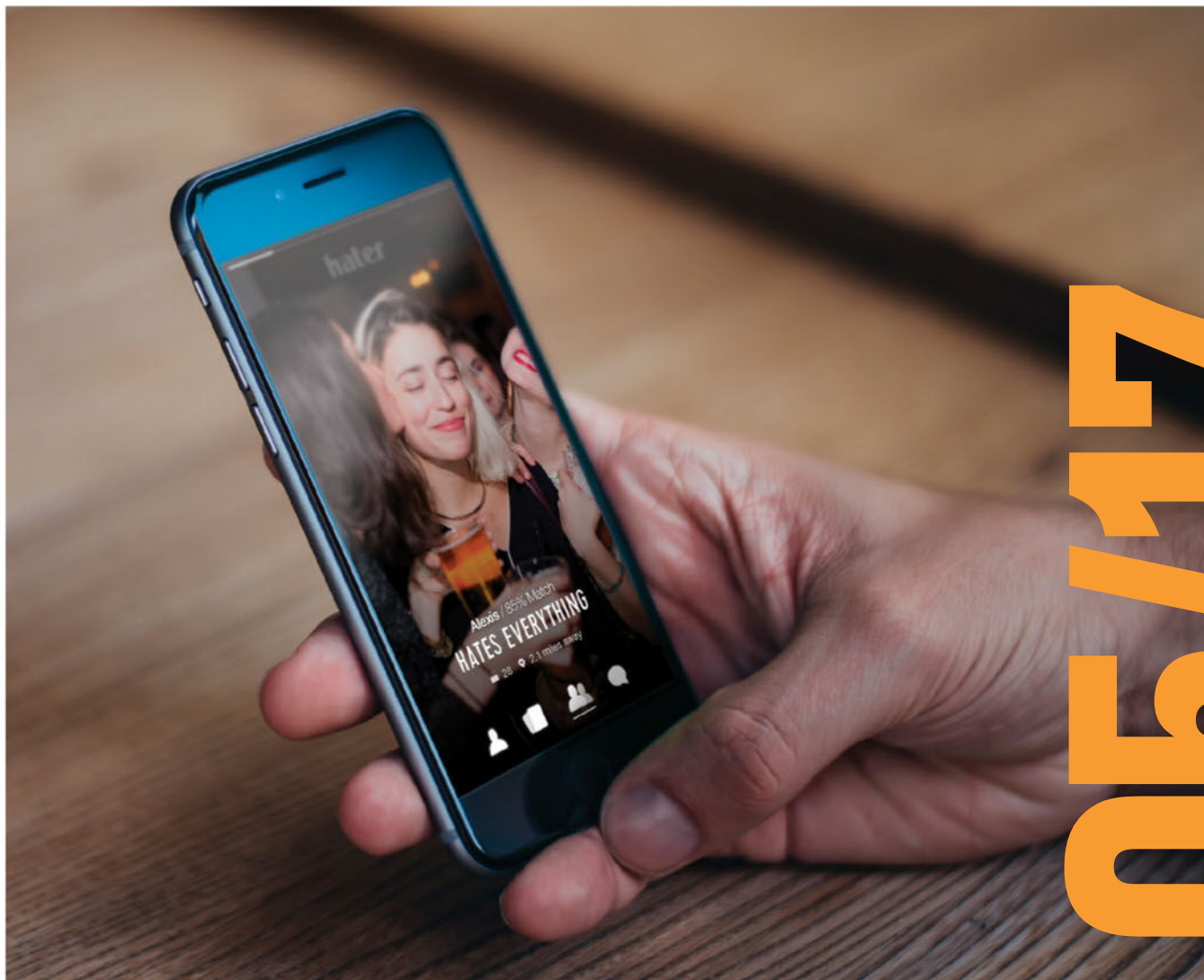
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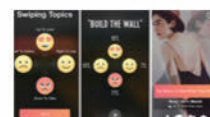




DEBRIEF

14: THE HATEFUL DATE

A dating app that makes matches based on what you hate



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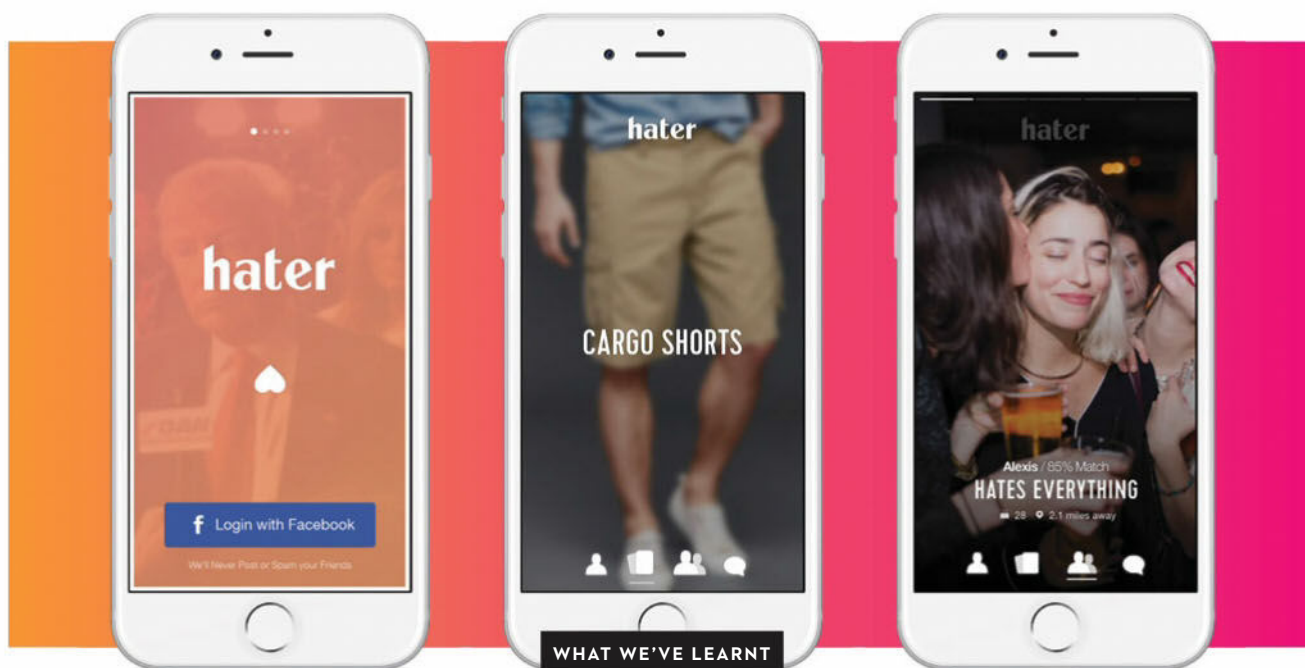
Robot AI is coming for your poker chips



20: MILLENNI-YAWN

Why Millennials don't go out anymore





THE HATEFUL DATE

It was Joy Division's Ian Curtis who proclaimed that "Love will tear us apart", but maybe hate can bring us together.

At least that's the hope behind Hater, a new dating app that allows people to connect over a mutual hatred of celebrities, concepts, activities, and foods. Users are presented with a diverse list of things to hate on, such as cargo shorts, paying extra for guac, Taylor Swift, and butt selfies. They swipe down if they hate it, swipe up if they love it, swipe right if they like it or swipe left if they dislike it. The app's algorithm then matches users based on location and their shared pet peeves.

It sort of sounds like a joke, and funnily enough, that's exactly how it started. The app's creator, Brendan Alper, is a former Goldman Sachs employee turned comedian who came up with the idea as part of a comedy sketch.

However, after doing a bit of research, he found that hate is a powerful bonding tool.

"What we hate is an important part of who we are, but it's often swept under the rug in our public persona," Alper said. "We want people to express themselves more honestly. Plus, it's easy to start a conversation if you know you both hate pickles."

There's even a built-in game that helps to break the ice with your matches, finally doing away with the uninspired, "Hey". The game provides a short scenario and lets users fill in the blanks with their own hate-inspired interpretation (think *Cards Against Humanity*.)

Is this another sign that technology is turning us all into cynical assholes? Maybe. But hey, haters gonna date.

Hater is only available on iOS for now but will launch on Android later in the year.

WHAT THE FROCK?

AN Italian priest is under investigation for domestic violence and abetting prostitution. Father Andrea Contin, 48, a parish priest at the Church of San Lazzaro in Padua is accused of having as many as 30 lovers, many of whom he regularly "pimped out" to other men through partner swapping websites. We get the

feeling that Father Contin may have picked the wrong profession.

One of his accusers said in her police statement that the priest carried a briefcase with him, but rather than the kinds of things you might expect to find in a priest's luggage (holy water, Bibles, sacraments or maybe a spare clerical collar?), his contained

"vibrators, sex toys, masks and bondage equipment"

The disgraced priest also disguised his homemade porn videos by labelling them with the names of various popes. Why he would want his porn to remind him of Benedict XVI or Servant of God Jean Paul I is anyone's guess.

A 49-year-old church volunteer came forward to offer her story of unholy union with the randy priest, stating that

when she went to him for spiritual guidance he put the moves on her, after which the couple engaged in regular sex.

"It happened in the rectory and in different houses," she said. "But I say no more because there are investigations."

Contin now faces possible criminal charges, and while the charges might not stick, church authorities have already announced that he'll be removed from his position and likely defrocked.

FAUX REAL?

PEOPLE for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is well known for its headline-grabbing publicity stunts. Over the years we've seen it condemn Pokémon for desensitising kids to animal cruelty, attempt to rename fish "sea kittens" and use drones to track hunting enthusiasts.

Their latest attempt to raise awareness is no less entertaining than what we've seen in the past.

PETA UK is petitioning the CEO of Warhammer 40,000 – a tabletop strategy game that stages fantasy battles using miniature figurines – to remove fur from the wardrobes of the game's models.

A public statement on the organisation's website reads: "From the mighty Leman Russ and Horus Lupercal to Chaos Warriors and the Sisters of Silence, Warhammer features an abundance of characters who wear what appear to be animal pelts, which just doesn't add up."

It's difficult to imagine the fur trade is being driven by nerdy dudes emulating their favourite Space Marine. And of course, the figurines aren't actually wearing any fur – they're made of resin – which makes this whole exercise seem a little pointless.

So why is PETA making this fringe hobby the target of their latest campaign, rather than say, fur distribution companies or hunting groups?

If we had to guess, it's because zany stunts like this get tonnes of media attention. It's obviously working – we're talking about it right now. But somewhat predictably, no one's talking about fur in fashion nearly as much as they're talking about PETA itself.



MORE FUN FROM FLORIDA

AHHH, good ol' Florida Man, what kind of trouble has he got himself into now? Usually found tossing gators through Wendy's drive-through windows or staring down hurricanes with nothing more than a pair of trunks and a US flag in hand, now he's mixed himself up in the drug game.

Kevin Johnson, 46, has been arrested by Hernando County police on suspicion of trafficking large quantities of heroin in the Tampa Bay area in Florida. What's more, emblazoned on the 5,500 packages seized by police were the faces of President Donald Trump, Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, and Colombian crime lord Pablo Escobar.

There's no explanation as to why these faces were used or what they might mean. But one thing is certain: Pam Bondi, Florida's attorney general, is pissed.

Bondi is a former member of Trump's transition team who's rumoured to be in the running for a White House post. She told the *Tampa Bay Times*, "All I want to say to this drug dealer is, 'Big mistake putting the president's picture on this.'"

Ms Bond even said she planned to make sure President Trump gets one of these packages when the case is over to put in the Oval Office and remind him of all the good he's doing.

Kind of a weird gift, but it's the thought that counts right?



MILF BURRITO

CHILDBIRTH is no picnic. For all the things us guys have to endure, we should be pretty damn happy that squeezing the equivalent of a large, lumpy football out of our bodies isn't one of them.

Unfortunately for most women, the pain of giving birth doesn't end with cutting the umbilical cord.

In Japan (the modern birthplace of all things strange and wonderful), one Kyoto-based midwife has come up with a truly bizarre way to treat the inevitable post-labour aches and pains women suffer.

It's called Otonamaki – which literally translates to “adult wrapping”, because apparently the best way to beat the baby pains is to be wrapped up and rocked like a baby yourself.

Several new mothers, as well as clients with problems like bow legs and stiffness, have signed up for the treatment that sees them swaddled in a large sheet and rocked from side to side for 15 to 20 minutes.

So far, the treatment has received pretty positive feedback. “It felt warm, and there was this feeling in my body. I have never experienced this before, so it's quite hard to describe properly,” said one mother after a session.

Unsurprisingly, not everyone is on board with the new treatment. Shiro Oba, a chiropractor from Akasaka Chiropractics, called bullshit on the strange-looking therapy, insisting that mothers experiencing pain should see a doctor.

“There may be cases where people with asthma may find it easier to breath (in that position), but once the cloth is off it's the same thing,” said Oba.



INDEPENDENT WORM SALOON

DOCTORS in India were shocked to remove a tapeworm measuring more than 6 feet through a patient's mouth, according to a report published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

After complaining about intolerable abdominal pain, the 48-year-old man visited the doctor, where part of the worm was discovered during a colonoscopy.

The attending doctor Cyriac Phillips wrote, “It was an undulating, moving piece of the worm. This worm segment was confirmation that there was a tapeworm infestation in this patient.”

If that's not graphic enough to make you gag, read on.

Following the initial discovery, the doctors confirmed the severity of the infection with an endoscopy, inserting a camera into the patient's throat to view the intestine. The team were then able to view images of the parasite.

After sedating the man, the team were able to begin the extraction process by pulling it out through his mouth with a pair of forceps.

“We had absolutely no idea regarding the length of this worm,” Phillips said. “It kept on coming.”

“We pulled at it softly and steadily, and ultimately the job was done after maybe around 1 hour and 15 minutes. I have never seen a tapeworm this long.”

When removed, the worm measured 1.9 metres and was classified as a pork tapeworm. If you want to avoid getting one, be sure to cook your pork properly and don't eat at restaurants with shitty sanitation practices.



ON THE DOWN LOW

NEXT time you're sitting in traffic, rest assured it probably won't be this bad forever. Elon Musk, the man who brought you SpaceX, Tesla, reusable rockets and Mars missions, has begun digging holes. Sound boring? He is – literally.

After various tweets lamenting LA's atrocious traffic, Musk began excavating a "test trench" 9 metres wide, 15 metres long and 4.5 metres deep on the grounds of SpaceX's grounds in LA. He's calling it the beginning of an experiment.

"We're just going to figure out what it

takes to improve tunneling speed by, I think, somewhere between 500 and 1,000 percent," he said. "We have no idea what we're doing – I want to be clear about that."

Obviously, the notion of building tunnels underground isn't new. However, Musk has presented a vision that surpasses anything hitherto imagined: beating congestion through a complex network of tunnels.

"If you think of tunnels going 10, 20, 30 layers deep or more, it is obvious that going three dimensions down will encompass

the needs of any city's transport of arbitrary size," he told *WIRED* in a Twitter direct message.

"You have tall buildings, they're all 3D, and then everyone wants to go into the building and leave the building at the same time," Musk said. "On a 2D road network, that obviously doesn't work, so you have to go 3D either up or down. And I think probably down."

For now, it remains speculative, but Musk does have a reputation as a guy who gets things done.

THE TELL TALE HEART

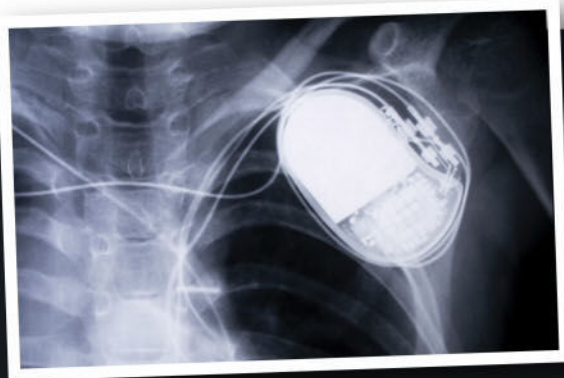
WE'RE well aware that we live in a society with heightened surveillance. Terrorist threat, something-something, danger! But did you know that you're also being watched from inside yourself?

Well, technically, that's not true. But one man has been arrested because police were able to determine that he was lying to them by using data from his pacemaker.

When Ross Compton, 59, called 911 to report a fire which caused \$400,000 in damages to his Ohio house in September last year, police were a little suspicious. Ross claimed that after realising his house was on fire, he had time to pack up a lot of his belongings and toss them through a window that he broke with his cane.

While this isn't impossible, it's unlikely – and made even more unlikely by the fact that Ross has an artificial heart. Not content with Compton's story, police acquired a warrant that allowed them to look at data from his pacemaker to see his heart rate at the time of the fire.

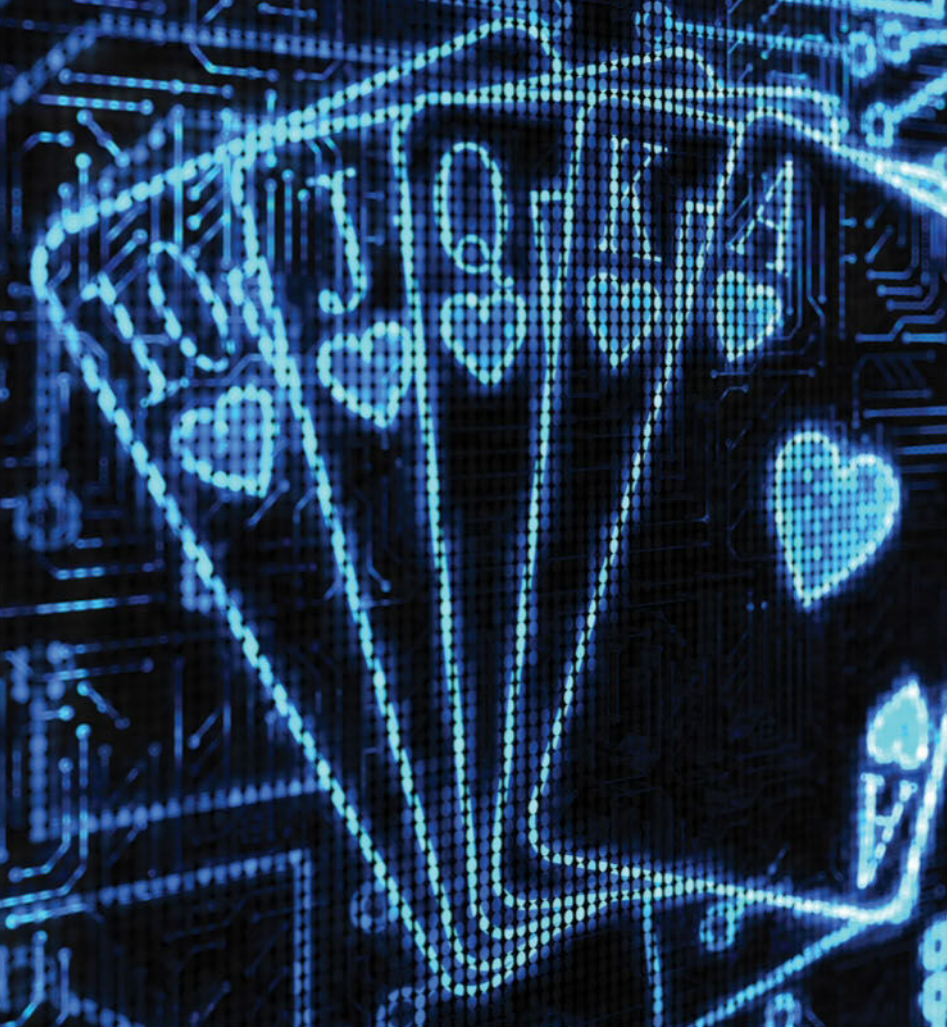
According to court documents seen by *Journal-News*, a cardiologist who reviewed the data determined, "It is highly



improbable Mr Compton would have been able to collect, pack and remove the number of items from the house, exit his bedroom window and carry numerous large and heavy items to the front of his residence during the short period he has indicated, due to his medical conditions."

Compton was caught red handed. Police later found evidence of gasoline in his shoes, and firemen determined the fire had started at multiple points within his house at the same time.

Compton calls the allegations "utterly insane" but unfortunately for Ross, this makes them no less true. Enjoy your new home, aka jail cell.



READ 'EM AND BLEEP

AFTER a marathon 20-day poker tournament in January, it is official – artificial intelligence is better at poker than humans.

The AI that proved it, named Libratus, took on four human pros at heads-up no-limit Texas hold 'em, emptying their pockets of US\$1.76 million and marking an historic moment in AI innovation.

Up until now, AI has been unable to beat humans in poker. While other games like Othello, Chess, GO and Jeopardy have all been conquered, poker requires a different skill set and has remained elusive.

"In contrast to those other games of intellect, a poker player can know only part of what's happening during each hand. Poker is an imperfect information game. So many of the cards are hidden – and so much luck is involved," explained Tuomas Sandholm, professor of computer science at the Carnegie Mellon University, and co-creator of Libratus. "AI is successfully using deep neural

networks to mimic the very human intuition that poker players rely on."

What's more incredible is that Libratus learnt to play poker from scratch.

"We give the AI a description of the game. We don't tell it how to play," says Noam Brown, a CMU PhD student who built the system alongside Professor Sandholm. "It develops a strategy completely independently from human play, and it can be very different from the way humans play the game."

Through a process known as reinforcement learning (a method of trial and error), after several months and trillions of hands of poker, Libratus was finally able to not only challenge humans, but also play in a way they could not.

The Libratus algorithms can take the 'rules' of a scenario or information game and come up with its own strategy. "The algorithms can take information and output a strategy in a range of scenarios, including negotiations, finance, medical treatment, and cybersecurity," said Sandholm.

NORTH KOREA ROCKS

NORTH KOREA is not a fun place. With its nuclear arsenal pointed in all directions and a baby-faced dictator with his finger on the button, it's rare to hear anything but doom and gloom from that part of the world. But life isn't all bad in the rogue state – as long as you're related to the Glorious Leader.

Kim Jong Chul, the little-known older brother of Kim Jong Un, is a huge Eric Clapton fan. And like his idol he's a masterful shredder on the guitar.

We know this because Thae Yong Ho, a recent defector from the North Korean regime and former deputy ambassador to London, told media last month about being called upon two years ago to buy tickets to Clapton's 70th Birthday Celebration Tour at the Albert Hall.

Thae attended the show with Chul, who ditched the beige military garb for a leather jacket and some aviators and came accompanied by a young lady initially thought to be his girlfriend.

Thae has revealed that the girl wasn't dating Chul, but was actually a rhythm guitarist from Moranbong Band, a pop group formed by Kim Jong Un. Kind of like American Idol, except there's only one vote that counts and the losers get sent to a labour camp.

After the show, the pair went to Denmark Street in London's West End to go shopping for new guitars. Chul impressed the shopkeepers, who let him play various guitars without even getting pissed when he started strumming 'Stairway to Heaven'.





COMING SOON

MARVEL STUDIOS

#SpiderManHomecoming

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MILLENNI-YAWN

WE'VE about hit the point where the media has probably said everything there is on the topic of Millennials. They're lazy, entitled, shiftless layabouts who persistently bitch and moan while adding nothing of value to society. Surely it's about time we put the whole subject to bed.

Well, apparently not.

The *New York Post* has thrown its hat into the ring with a new observation about today's misguided youth.

Apparently, they don't go out. Specifically, "They're the greatest generation – of couch potatoes," according to *NYP*.

That's right – the generation that saw fit to mourn a dead gorilla by getting their "dicks out" has redefined the rules once again by refusing to take part in the time honoured tradition of getting absolutely shitfaced on the weekend.

The reasons put forward by *NYP* for this generational anomaly? Youngins today are too content to "Netflix

and Chill" and can't be bothered leaving the house. That, combined with the high price of nightlife in major cities and you've got an epidemic of 30-year-olds who are tamer than their grandparents.

But unfortunately, according to some experts, staying indoors can hurt one's emotional wellbeing.

"They're not consuming alcohol, but they're consuming a lot of media – and it's depressing them," according to Manhattan-based psychologist Dr Michael Brustein.

Dr Brustein says that he is encountering a large number of patients who complain they feel depressed after a big weekend of doing nothing.

But maybe they're onto something. As one young writer from *VICE* stated in response to the *NYP* article, "People used to worry about stuff like drought, famine, and a new band of men with swords riding into town."

"For most of the humans who have ever lived, this generation's typical night in represents an impossible pinnacle of luxury."

MAN CALLS POLICE BECAUSE HE'S TOO HIGH

EVER had a hit of the ganja and thought to yourself, "I'm so high I should probably call the police." Nope? Us neither. Not only does that fail to make sense in any situation, but what the hell are the cops going to do, arrest you?

This line of reasoning didn't stop one stoned hero. After presumably hitting the bong way too hard, he called the police and told them he was "too high."

After arriving at the 22-year-old's Ohio home, the police heard groaning coming from inside the house. According to details in the police report, upon entering, they found him in the foetal position, "Surrounded by a plethora of Doritos, Pepperidge Farm Goldfish, and Chips Ahoy cookies".

After coming to, the man confessed to smoking the weed in his car, and handed over his keys. They recovered a glass pipe, rolling papers, small roaches, and a jar of weed.

The police were called at 5:20pm, just an hour after 4:20pm, a detail we're sure wasn't overlooked. The man refused medical treatment and has not yet been charged.



THE BIG QUESTION

WE'VE finally got an answer to one of life's most important questions: Is a Snuggie a blanket – or is it a robe? In a landmark case in the Federal Trade Court Judge Mark Barnett put an end to a ten-year disagreement between the Justice Department and Allstar Marketing Group, the makers of Snuggies.

The Snuggie, for the uninitiated, is a fleecy blanket with sleeves worn by people who are active enough to get out of bed, but still too lazy to leave the house.

The Justice Department argued that for the purpose of levying importation taxes, the Snuggie should be considered as "robes or priestly vestments", which incurs a higher tax than if it were considered a regular old blanket.

And after ten long years of careful deliberation, we finally have an answer. Judge Barnett decided that The Snuggie is not considered clerical or ecclesiastical garments but is just a blanket with sleeves. He pointed to the fact that the packaging clearly calls the product 'the Blanket with Sleeves!' This combined with the fact most people use the snuggie in situations where one would usually use a blanket, meant that Snuggie importers were correct to pay the lower 8.5% import tax.

We sure are glad that's sorted.

This case will no doubt go down as one of the most important findings since Miriam Webster's declaration that a hotdog is a sandwich.

DRUG DEAL GOES WRONG WHEN CUSTOMER GETS THE SHITS

WE'VE all had bad deals. Bad deals, like having your dealer suddenly up his price, are a part of the game.

In that situation, most people would either A) suck it up and move on, or B) Call the dealer and ask for their money back. Both of these options are reasonable courses of action.

One lady decided to do neither

of the above, opting instead for option C) call the police and tell them about the "outrageous" price hike her weed dealer just pulled on her. One can only assume she was incredibly stoned the entire time. After inquiring further, the lady refused to reveal any more details to the police for fear of incriminating herself, and hung up.

In a Facebook post, the

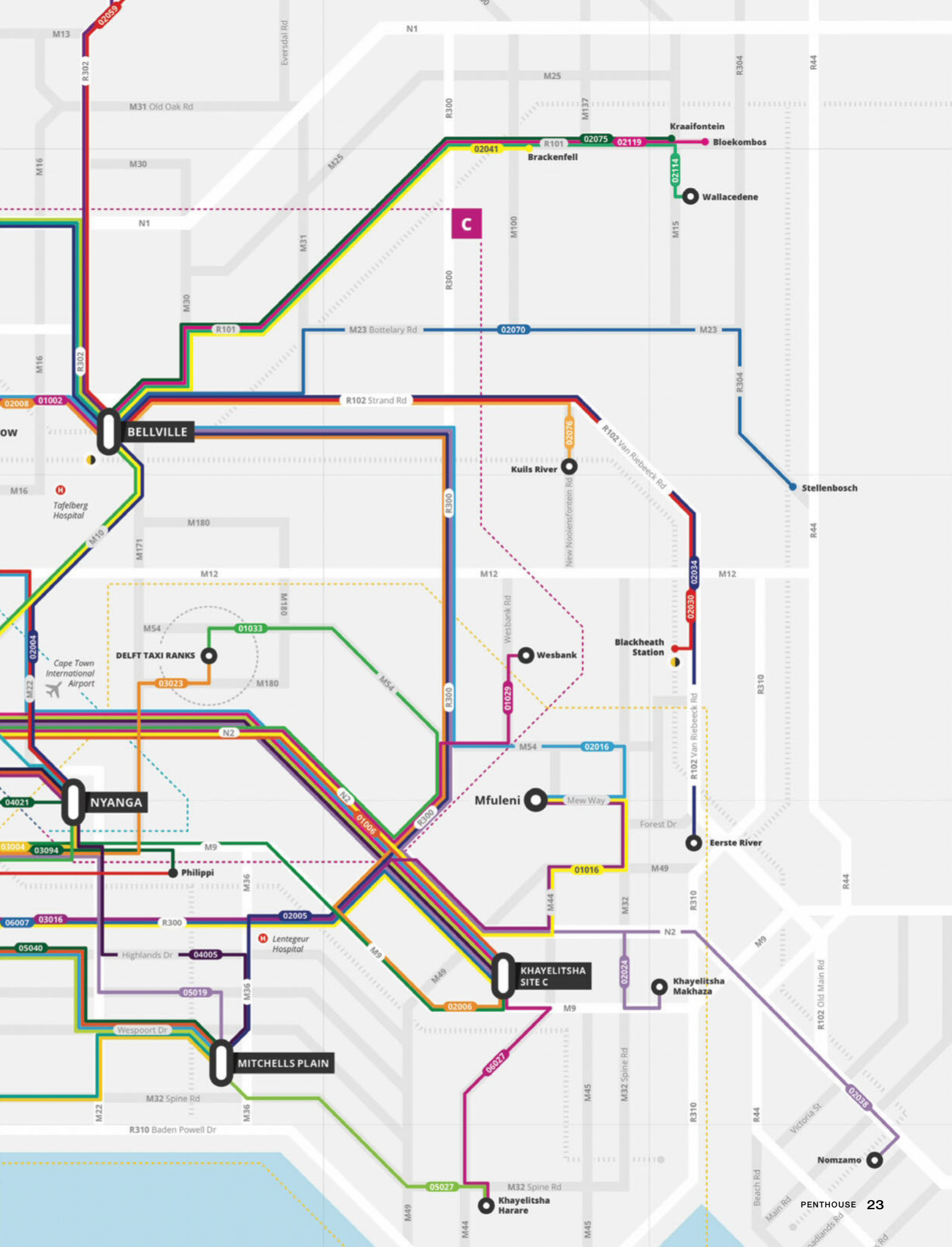
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services said the woman's bizarre call "had to top the list of 'unusual.'"

In a cheeky move, the department decided to get a little creative with their social media by ending their post with, "If you know a drug dealer who is ripping you off, give us a call. We'd love to help."

GET THE PICTURE

EVERY day, more than 5,000 people commute to and from Wallacedene in Cape Town. Up until now, transit maps did not exist. Thanks to emerging technologies like the phone in your pocket, it's now possible to build a full-scale map that didn't exist eight years ago. The **WhereIsMyTransport** platform is an open platform for integrated public transport data in emerging cities. 1







HOT SHOT

COOLING DOWN

Model: Valeria Rai

 @valeriarai_xx

THE INTERNET OF THINGS

The Internet of Things is the biggest thing that until recently, we'd never heard of. It's currently a human-to-human affair, but that is changing. What exactly is it, and how does it work?

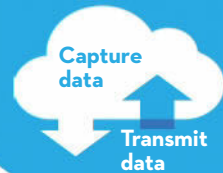
WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE

These things are starting to talk to each other and develop their own intelligence. Imagine a morning scenario where...



HOW IT WORKS:

The Internet of Things (IoT) connects machines and devices to one another. To become connected an object must be able to:



FROM 2003
TO 2010

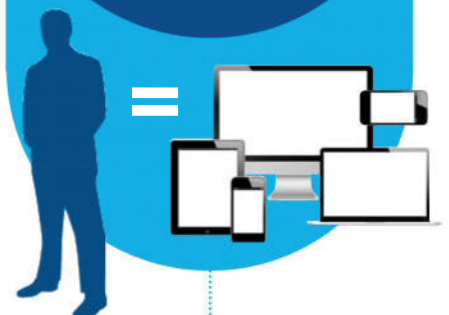
**10-20
BILLION**

THINGS WERE CONNECTED
TO THE INTERNET

BY 2020 THIS
NUMBER IS ESTIMATED
TO GROW TO

**40-50
BILLION**

That's roughly 5
connected devices per
person on Earth



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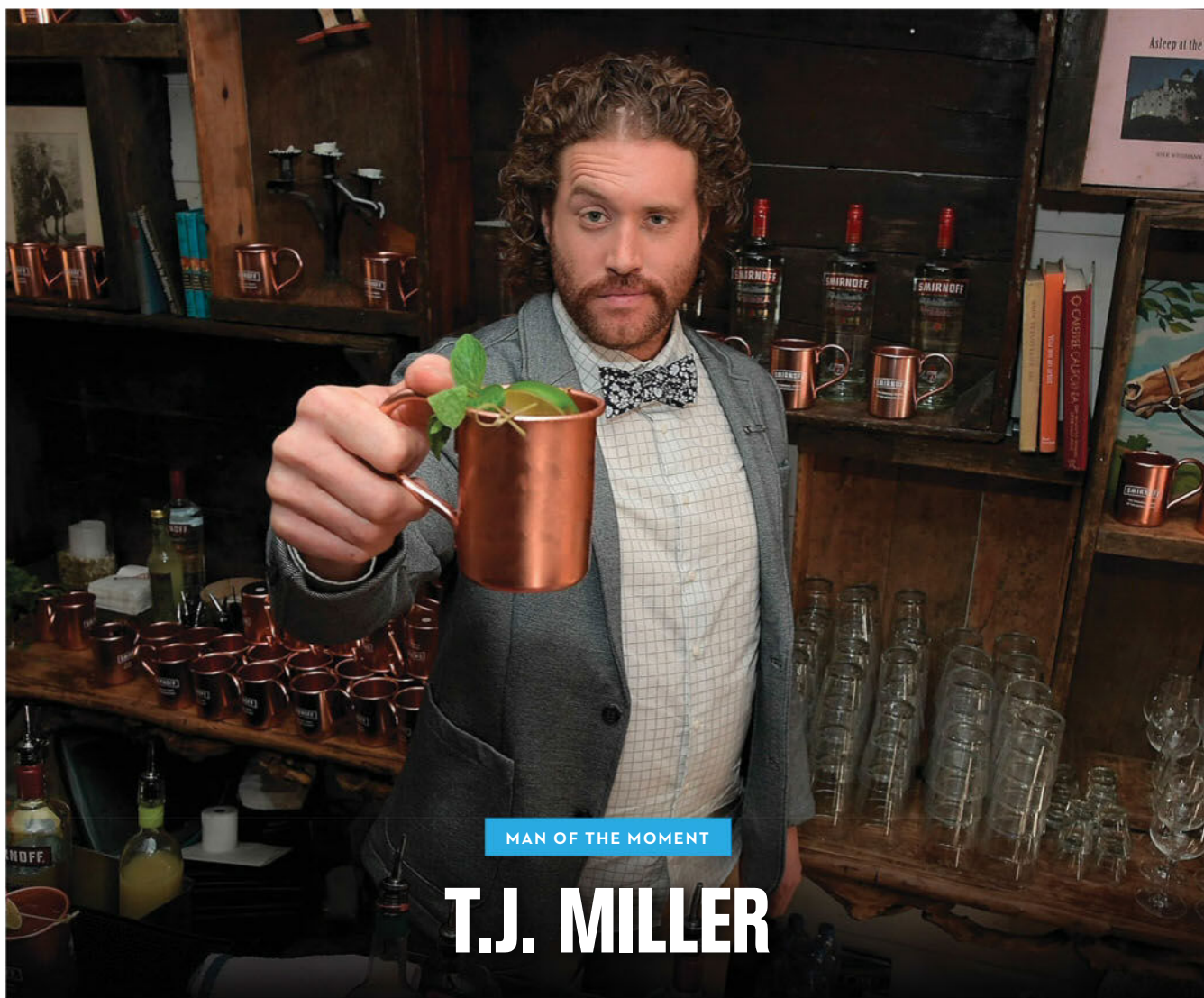


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ANYONE who's seen HBO's *Silicon Valley*, currently in its fourth season, knows damn well that Erlich Bachman, the pompous blowhard played by comedian T. J. Miller, is arguably the best part of the show. And for a series as good as *Silicon Valley*, that's saying a lot.

With his bizarre facial hair and proud beer gut, Bachman is a tech-bro poser who runs an "innovation incubator" out of his house, nurturing the ill-named Pied Piper startup, along with its small crew of founders. Bachman claims to no longer code because of severe carpal tunnel syndrome, though through his unshakable confidence, he somehow helps keep the ever-listing company afloat. "We're walking in there with three-foot cocks covered in Elvis dust!"

Is there any Bachman in Miller? After all, the 35-year-old admits to a lack of dramatic chops, but he's managed to make a go of it in film and TV since 2007. "I'm not a very good actor," Miller told HBO. Laughing, he continued, "I don't really know how to act that much. I'm quite good at comedy, but it's mostly acting naturally." Whatever he's doing, it's working, in 2015, he snagged a Critics' Choice award for Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series for his *Silicon Valley* role.

Miller, in his stand-up (including his Comedy Central special "No Real Reason") comes across as a guy high as fuck on booze, coke, weed, and meds, but the mix is so perfect he's always hilariously on-point.

This could-be-high demeanor didn't do him any favours in 2010, however, when he endured a potentially fatal medical emergency. Miller was diagnosed with a golf-ball-sized brain malformation that affects behavior, learning, and personality, along with causing hallucinations. Naturally he worked the experience into his stand-up. "I started getting excited about entanglement puzzles," he told one audience. "I was studying them and taking them apart and putting them back together. I would talk about the narrative path of the conversation before I engaged in it, and then I would hit those signposts in the conversation and usually end with a compliment."

After surgery, he asked his friends if they'd noticed anything weird. "Oh yeah," they told him. "We thought you were on drugs." "That shows you how good of friends you have," Miller riffed. "They think you're on meth, and they're just like, 'Don't mention it. It will work itself out.'"

A headline-making arrest in 2016 (he smacked an Uber driver after an argument) was just more comedy fodder for the untouchable Miller.

His TV and movie slate is full as well. Along with a guest slot on the new Judd Apatow HBO series *Crashing* and voicing Gene in *The Emoji Movie* (WTF! They're making movies about emojis now?), he'll appear in his fifth project with Jay Baruchel in the hockey comedy *Goon: Last of the Enforcers*.

And if all else fails, he can always fall back on his recurring role as the talking snot wad in the Mucinex commercials. **1**

THE NEW KING OF SCI-FI

FRENCH-CANADIAN director Denis Villeneuve grew up in a village next to the only nuclear plant in Quebec. It's a pretty ominous backdrop for a child, and we can't help but wonder if it helped inspire his interest in making sci-fi films. If you ask him, he'll tell you that he used to try to convince people he was born in the reactor core, sort of like a superhero origin story. But the 49-year-old Hollywood director doesn't seem to have any noticeable superpowers, just a serious knack for creating compelling science fiction for the big screen.

If you're a fan of the genre, 2017 is looking to be a stand-out year for sci-fi. There's *Ghost in a Shell*, another addition to the *Star Wars* franchise, an *Alien* prequel, and the next instalment of *Planet of the Apes* – the list goes on.

From Villeneuve, who's already released his intricately told sci-fi masterpiece *Arrival* to widespread critical acclaim, we're going to see the belated sequel to Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*.

No doubt fanboys and critics will be ready to shred the crap out of it if it fails to live up to their expectations.

We're talking about a director that critics are calling the new king of sci-fi. And more importantly, he's already shown with films like *Sicario*, *Arrival* and *Prisoners*, that his use of tone and ability to bring a storyboard to life make him the ideal candidate for the stylised grittiness of *Blade Runner*.

He's also a director who insists on achieving his vision through real sets and props over a green screen. Take a look at

SOUNDSCAPES

Villeneuve is one of a few Hollywood directors who works closely with sound to see that it directly marries up with the movement and themes on screen. To do this, he relies on the considerable musical talents of Jóhann Jóhannsson, whom he worked with on *Sicario*, *Arrival* and *Prisoners*, all of which utilise soundscapes to reflect what's happening on-screen.

SICARIO:

The direction from Villeneuve was "subtle war music".

Jóhannsson's use of pulsing percussive instruments with softer touches from a classical orchestra reflect the understated violence onscreen.

ARRIVAL:

The central theme of this movie is communication. Jóhannsson uses human voices that almost sound like an unintelligible language with vocal loops to mimic the circular logographs the aliens use to communicate.

the *Blade Runner* 2049 trailer, and you can see grimy, neon-lit streets, teeming with anonymous faces, sprawling architecture and real looking sets. It's 2017, but Villeneuve's bringing old-school effects and set design back to sci-fi.

Fans love it. *Arrival* is cleaning up in awards season, having already won 17 awards and a further 130 nominations. While there was a fair bit of CGI used in that film, plenty of it was real sets. Of course, the giant obsidian eggs were created by a bunch of geeks behind a computer, but their vast cavernous interiors were all real.

The squid-like aliens that appear behind glass in the ships are CGI, but Villeneuve actually wanted to use puppets. "We were dreaming to put them in a gigantic aquarium with gigantic beasts that would be moved by puppeteers. But sadly, it would have been too expensive," he opined in an interview with *Vanity*.

Dark, ominous and tense are words that describe Villeneuve's directorial vision – he's bringing the apocalypse back to science fiction film, and in a time where overpopulation, climate change and political upheaval are making daily headlines, his filmmaking is hitting the right notes with audiences. Apparently the major Hollywood studios love his work too. Just recently, after loads of rumour-mongering, Villeneuve officially put ink on paper to direct Frank Herbert's classic *Dune*. Otherwise known as the film that almost ended David Lynch's career. The Quebec native has said that it's always been his dream to do it, but it definitely won't be easy. **1**





DANCE, DANCE REVOLUTION

WHEN a publication of *The Wall Street Journal's* ilk sees fit to decry the commercialisation of the dance music scene, it might be time for those pointing fingers to indulge in a spot of reflection.

That was five years ago, before top DJs were signing multi-million dollar endorsement deals to spruik the likes of Coca-Cola, Nokia and Nike. Many have chimed in since, including a surprising number of performers still cashing in at the coalface, to warn of EDM's unsustainable bubble or to outright declare its demise.

The arguments follow a common thread. The corrupting influence of corporate appropriation, coupled with a lack of credible talent, has led to a plastic culture of stagnant productions, overpriced tickets, and – anecdotally at least – a consequent consumer backlash.

Is the unfavourable commentary just a case of pettifogging – a cynical exercise in image management and the usual portents of doom as the media's stock-in-trade – or is it possible that the end of EDM is in sight?

For those who survived the dance music scene's previous popular incarnation in the '90s, EDM has always been a curious phenomenon. Fundamentally, it's cultural repackaging. And although it's snowunfolding on a far grander scale, the similarities persist enough to provoke legitimate flashbacks in even the most chemically blighted of brains: crazy lasers, sparkly fashion, shady pills, and a persistently hysterical press. The continual death-knell proclamations will also ring familiar.

It's been about twenty years since the last crop of electronic producers – artists such as The Prodigy and The Chemical Brothers – emerged from a homespun, flourishing dance music scene to bridge the Atlantic and achieve mainstream success. Joining them were a slew of newly refined or more fully formed acts with a keener eye on the commercial market, such as radio-friendly Moby, and, most notably today, a pair of disco robots by the name of Daft Punk. Soon enough, middle-aged mothers were attending step classes to a soundtrack of Sash! and dance music was officially dead.

Of course, it wasn't quite that simple, and the flame flickered on in other forms. The basic gist, however, remains the same; the commodification of dance music culture effectively killed it.

Electronic beats have become routine in advertising and incorporated into every pop song at the exact time nightclubs are closing en masse. That the scene's downturn coincided with dance music's commercial maturation is no coincidence. The sound no longer represented the insular, sub-cultural ethos that spawned it.

Strangely, EDM still manages to market itself as alternative, but such a charade doesn't fit alongside its ever-expanding commercial scope. And there's emerging evidence that the current chorus of alarm bells is being backed by the cold, hard facts of economics, with reports of massive pay cuts and the familiar downsizing of clubs. Are EDM enthusiasts finally getting ready to revolt against the corporate machinery and destroy the dance scene for good? Or, as was once said, is it all just a little bit of history repeating? **1**



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GAMING

AUTHORITAH FIGURES SOUTH PARK: THE FRACTURED BUT WHOLE

Ubisoft (Xbox One, PS4, PC)

A game about a racist superhero named The Coon and his team of potty-mouth misfits would never fly unless it crawled from the gutterbrains of Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the duo behind the adult kid's cartoon *South Park* (among other pointed satire).

Twenty seasons of *South Park*'s offend-everyone social commentary, Kenny assassinations, and Cartman's big-boneheaded shenanigans have built a universe that spawned inevitable videogames, most of them better than your typical licensed turds (see below) – thanks to Parker and Stone's participation. Their seminal work was *South Park: The Stick*

of Truth, a best-selling role-playing adventure that was also the funniest game of 2014. This sequel, *Fractured But Whole*, goes deeper and longer with the role-playing concept.

Once again, players slip into the crudely animated sneakers of the New Kid (aka "Douchebag"), a pre-teen transplant to the South Park community who must prove himself/herself/itself (gender neutrality is a theme) as a worthy friend to Cartman, Stan, Kyle, Kenny, et al.

Bored with imaginary medieval times, the boys don the superhero personas of Coon and Friends, an Avengers-flavoured team led by Cartman bent on building the ultimate superhero franchise. Naturally,

Cartman's heavy-handed leadership style and boundless narcissism create a schism between the kids, who face-off in a civil war. Your character must choose a class – from Flash-style speedsters to X-Manly mutants – and make this fractured team whole again. Combat goes deep as you array your heroes and unleash attacks that are both bizarrely cool (Kyle the Human Kite can nuke the battlefield from orbit) and hilarious (you can rewind events with farts that rip a hole in the time-space continuum). Series diehards will uncover endless fan service, lapsed *South Park* fans will reconnect with the characters during the epic storyline, and everyone will find something that offends them. 1

LICENSED GARBAGE: THE SHITTIEST GAMES BASED ON HOT PROPERTIES

WHITE MEN CAN'T JUMP (Atari Jaguar, 1995)

What kid growing up in the 1990s didn't want to play the videogame adaptation of Woody Harrelson and Wesley Snipe's blockbuster about high-stakes street-basketball gambling? *White Men Can't Jump* sucked the fun out of videogame basketball with its horrendous control and insane commentary that flashed such Pulitzer-worthy catchphrases as "That had to hurt!"

STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE (Arcade, PlayStation, 1995)

This game based on a movie represented the most blatant cash grab in the history of licensed anything. Actors poorly digitised from the movie replaced the beloved pixelated artwork from the hit *Street Fighter* fighting series, while combat felt mushy and rushed. This is still the best game ever made staring both Jean-Claude Van Damme and the late Raúl Juliá.

SUPERMAN 64 (Nintendo 64, 1999)

Even non-comic nerds know about the Man of Steel's super-strength, heat-vision, and ability to see through yoga pants, but this infamously awful N64 game scrapped all those powers and forced players to fly Superman through thousands of hoops suspended in a green Kryptonite fog, an obvious programming trick to hide a Metropolis built from, like, 11 polygons max.

LAST ALERT (TurboGrafx-CD, 1989)

Combining all of the best worst things about late-80s games – such as the bad "Engrish" of meme-spawning shooter *Zero Wing* and the bottomless storage capacity of CD-ROMS – Last Alert delivered hours of corny dialog ("You can't hire my feelings," says the hero) delivered gamely by actors taking the "more is more" approach. Search online for "Last Alert + voice acting."



BUSTED

PSYCHIC SWINDLERS

THE future looks somewhat uncertain for a global network of mail scammers centred around clairvoyant extraordinaire Maria Duval, after the United States Department of Justice filed an injunction barring the fraudsters from any further activities in America.

A signatory to the settlement, Ms Duval (aka Maria Gamba) has been the complicit face of the fraud over the past twenty years, but full details on the wider web of conspirators involved in the swindle remain unclear.

The modus operandi of these nefarious pen pals is pitifully simple; they offer psychic visions of financial windfalls and eternal happiness should the recipient of their unsolicited letters reply with a cheque for \$49 to receive a personalised mystical/ancient/vibrating talisman/amulet/scroll direct from a shaman in India (factory in China). Or some variation of such a thing.

But the numbers are staggering. It's alleged that more than one million victims were conned out of over US\$180 million in the United States alone. And these unscrupulous grifters have been running game from Japan to Russia and everywhere in between for the best part of two decades, including (and still recently) in Australia.

In 2002, consumer protection agencies in Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria boasted of putting the brakes on Maria Duval. Yet, reporters investigating the scam for CNN just last year traced one tentacle back to Victorian resident Joseph Patrick Davitt, listed as the

director of a company holding international rights to the Maria Duval trademark and the mariadual.com domain.

When contacted by CNN, Davitt immediately went to ground, deleting the web page and any trace of his associated public profile. Well, not entirely – his shiny, new \$1.5million luxury mansion was featured on 7TWO's Australia's Best Houses, and footage of the episode can still be accessed online.

And then there's Kelvin Parker, the self-described "entrepreneur's copywriter", who graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Queensland in '86 – those heady days of Bond and Skase – before providing his services to a roll call of convicted fraudsters, including the company where, at that very time, the psychic mail scam first emerged.

Parker's 'entrepreneurial' copywriting style can be characterised as a stream of capitalised WORDS!!! and pseudo-psychological DIRECT marketing jargon!!! – similar to the type targeting the elderly, desperate or lonely victims of the scam, including one young girl who was found dead by suicide with a Maria Duval letter in her hand.

While these two Aussies may only be the repulsive surface blisters in this undying herpes of a con, the whole operation just keeps going, like a game of whack-a-mole, without its perpetrators ever paying their dues. And with the defendants of the DoJ's prosecution settling this latest case without any admission of guilt, has anyone really been busted? ①



TO anyone who's been watching closely, Senator Cory Bernardi's split from the Liberal Party and the founding of the Australian Conservatives is really not that surprising. The media has long branded Bernardi the "rebel of the right", and he's always been considered a bit of a political weirdo, even by his own party. Back in 2011, one of his colleagues memorably referred to him in a *Monthly* essay as, "deluded... He is one of the least effective or important members of the parliamentary team... He should really never have risen above the position of branch president. His right-wing macho-man act is just his way of looking as though he stands for something." If this sort of criticism ever had any effect on Bernardi, he sure as hell never showed it. In fact, if anything, Cory Bernardi is proud of his outsider status.

A little more surprising is Bernardi's absorption of the crumbling Family First Party. Although, all things considered, they do make a perfect match. Both are from South Australia, both are so far right they could fairly be considered "fringe," and both kind of need each other if they are to make any kind of worthwhile impact on senate decision making. Further, it could be the beginnings of a consolidated right wing populist movement here in Australia. Bernardi sure hopes so.

At the end of last year, while he was on secondment to the United Nations in New York, he had a ringside seat to a major right-wing insurgency. In the weekly newsletters from his office (the colourfully named "weekly dose of common sense") his usual diatribe against the "tyrannical progressive agenda" of the left became further supplemented with pot shots at his own party.

He opined in a November newsletter that "the level of support for this dangerous [left wing] agenda by Liberals has been heartbreaking to witness". He spoke of a demand for change, citing the fact that 40 per cent of voters didn't cast ballots for either major party in the last federal election as further proof that people in Australia, just like in the United States and in Britain, are sick of the political establishment.

Now, with a powerful surge in support for populist right-wing politics in Western democracies around the world, it seems the time is perfect for Bernardi to become Australia's Donald Trump. And while he doesn't agree that he is importing Trumpism, jokingly

noting that he has a "different colour tan", the similarities are certainly there. He shares the Donald's sentiments on Islam, climate change and immigration and the familiar message that "the political class is failing". Trump famously promised to "drain the swamp", and now in Bernardi's terms, he is "cleaning up Canberra".

Will Bernardi's revolt have the same impact here in Australia as Trump's did in the US? Probably not – at least not for now. The only Family First senator in federal parliament has inexplicably refused to join Bernardi's Conservative Party, so he will still only have his one seat to work with. If we look at the numbers, with Bernardi's defection, the Coalition will need ten votes to pass legislation as opposed to nine. The biggest impact will be on the Greens' ability to play kingmaker – their nine Senate votes used to be enough to get the Coalition over the line – now one more cross-bencher will need to come along for his to happen. If the Greens won't come to the table, the Coalition will need One Nation, NXT and three of the five other crossbenchers, which includes Bernardi and Family First's Lucy Gichuhi. Working with the Labour Party will remain the easiest way for the government to pass legislation through the upper house.

It's expected that the Conservative Party will likely have more clout in the South Australian senate where Family First are better represented and where their senators have agreed to join Bernardi's Conservative Party.

So if his move doesn't really change anything – why bother? His former Liberal party colleagues are undoubtedly asking the same question. Among cries of political treachery, the Libs are miffed that Bernardi used his position on the party ballot paper to get elected. A seat, according to fellow South Australian MP Christopher Pyne, he never would have won without the party's support.

"There are 350,000 voters from South Australia who wanted a Liberal Party Senator, and I think Cory owes them an explanation," Pyne said.

"The honourable thing to do would be to resign and re-contest the seat as an independent as his political hero Phil Gramm from Texas did."

Cory Bernardi did not respond to a request for comment. **i**

05/17



THINK DIFFERENT KRYSTAL LENKOVA

THIS shoot is a reference to the iconic images attached to a 1984 *Rolling Stone* feature on Steve Jobs, right around the time he and Apple released the first Macintosh personal computer. It was the beginning of a technological revolution that eventually changed the world. Celebrating Jobs' contributions, we asked Krystal Lenkova about the influence technology has on her life.

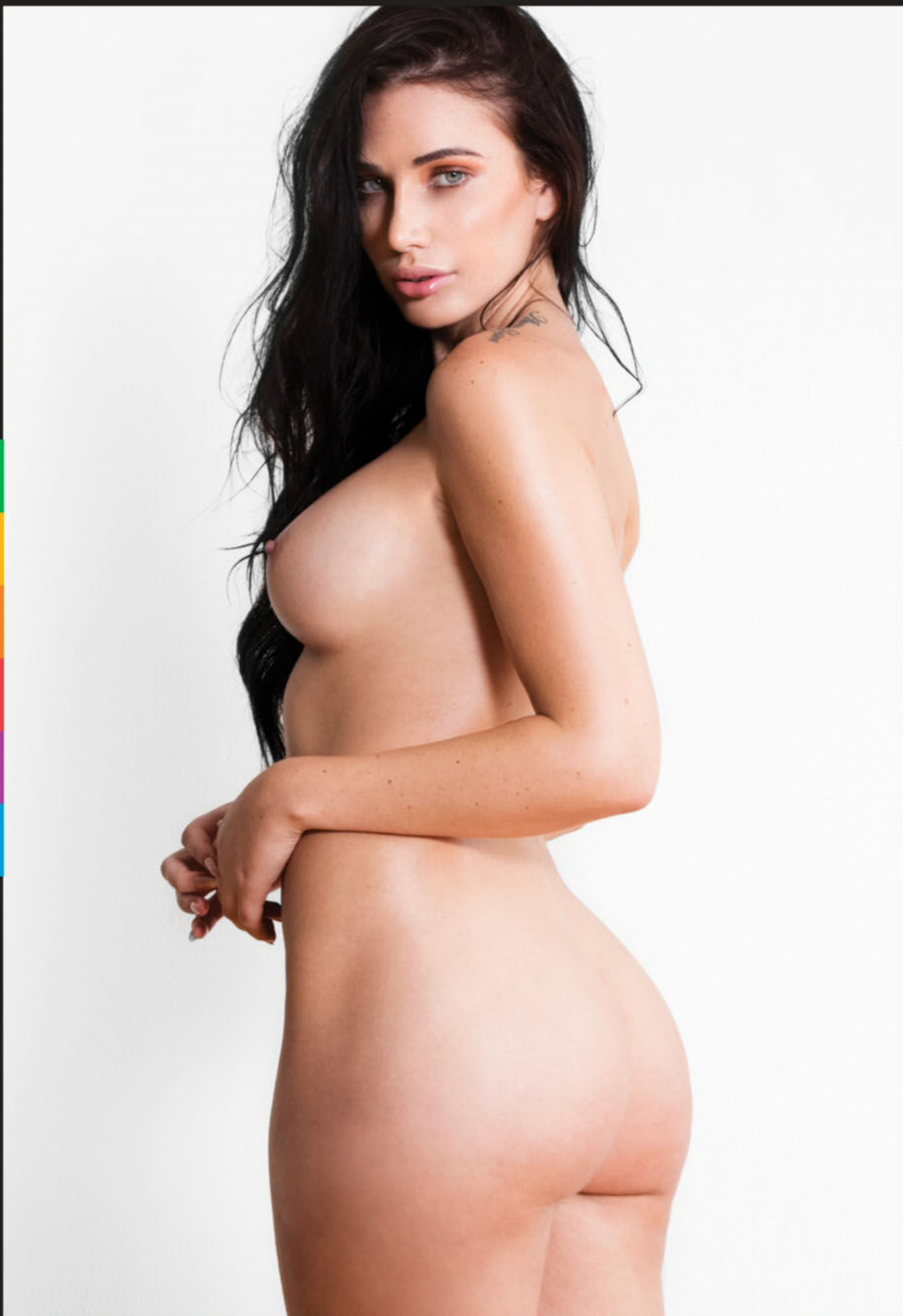
"I think about 90% of the time I spend on my phone is spent on Instagram (@lovelenkova). There is something about it, it's so addictive. I have a following of over 210K which is so crazy to me, because I think I'm pretty boring. I'm not complaining, as it's helped me get in touch with a lot of great companies and people around the world, and landed me a few fun jobs. My phone is glued to me. It's my favourite piece of technology."

PHOTOGRAPHER: BEN









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INTERVIEW

CREATURE CREATOR

WE TALK TO LEGENDARY VISUAL EFFECTS ARTIST AND
ACADEMY AWARD-WINNER **JOHN COX** ABOUT HIS
CAREER IN BRINGING CREATURES TO LIFE
INTERVIEW BY SEAN BRUCE

JOHN Cox makes monsters. And animals and humans and pretty much anything you can imagine. In the pre-digital effects days, when animatronic creations dominated Hollywood sets, John was the go-to guy for stunningly lifelike animal creations. His work on the iconic Australian-American film *Babe* netted John an Oscar for visual effects, and since then he's worked on a number of other high-profile Hollywood sets as well as building sculptures for public art projects. We sat down with John to talk about his career in film, his art and the future of animatronics in Hollywood.



ROGUE (2006)

PH: What are you up to today?

JC: These days I'm mainly involved in large-scale sculptures, both for myself and for assisting other sculptors to achieve their visions. We do a lot of prototyping for different industries out there and we still do various bits and pieces for films that require specialist sculpting skills.

How has your career changed?

My trajectory has changed somewhat. It's been an interesting 38 years in the film industry in that I started out making props and sculpting creatures and things. In 1978, the year after *Star Wars* came out. That year I met a guy called David Pride, and David and I both had an interest in *Star Wars* and how it was achieved, so we set about building our own motion control camera system. There were only two or three in the world at that time, and they were in the US, and I think there was one being built in the UK.

So technology's been a large part of what you've done since the beginning?

Absolutely. That motion control camera was the first of its kind built here and that

Babe, I looked after building all of the sheep, mice, puppies, the robber's dog and chickens, and Robotech looked after doing all the robotic components for it, which then plugged into Jim Henson's control system. This was all leading-edge technology at the time and the American company Rhythm & Hues were brought on board to look after the new area of doing digital work on live animals. Up until then, *Terminator 2* and *Jurassic Park* were the two big standout films that had used digital. No-one had done fur before, so Rhythm & Hues really had their work cut out for them. So that was real cutting-edge technology from the animatronics side, which was probably one of the first times that robotic animals had been put out in the great outdoors alongside their real life counterparts and were delivering performances and dialogue with real animals. It was really cutting edge.

What was it that attracted you to making creatures?

When I was growing up in Sydney, probably from age nine through to 14, every Saturday afternoon Channel Seven

though it was monsters that got me into it, I got known as the animal guy because I could make replica animals that looked exactly like the real thing. I've made polar bears and koalas, sheep and sharks – you name it. A project came along which we had been discussing in-house about doing large-scale public artworks where you make 20 or 30 of these sculptures and you get artists in to paint them. Then you put them out in the public domain for two months, people look at them and then they're auctioned off and the proceeds go to a good cause. We had everything sussed up until the point of the auction, where do the proceeds go? It was a real stumbling block.

Funnily enough, within the same period, I got a phone call from one of the councillors down Currumbin way, Councillor Chris Robbins, and she said that one of her constituents had come to her with a photo of this project that was in London at the moment called Go Gorillas, which was a whole bunch of gorillas they'd had artists paint. She thought we could do something here on the Gold Coast and involve Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. That was the missing piece. So we all got together, and we formed the project Animals with Attitude, and the koala was basically the animal that had to be created. So we've done two lots of koalas for Animals with Attitude, 51 have been made and all the proceeds go to the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

Did you find it easy to transition from movie sets to the art world?

Absolutely. Because I started out as a sculptor. In the sculpting side of things, everything I've learnt over the last 38 years on sculpting, moulding, casting, finishing, is all adaptable to so many different things, which is why I'm getting so many calls from other artists to get me to help them and mentor them to get their sculptures done.

Are you able to name a favourite from your collection?

That's a difficult one, but I'd have to say the crocodile we did for *Peter Pan* was astounding.

What was astounding about it?

We had a very specific set of problems. So I called in some cluey people who knew about hydraulics and another group that knew about controlling hydraulics and converting a controlled system into a performance system so that it's not just you throwing a lever backwards and forwards. You've got hand controls that can control numerous motions at once. That

WHEN I WAS 14, I SAW THE ORIGINAL KING KONG – THE BLACK AND WHITE ONE – AND THAT WAS IT FOR ME. THAT WAS AN ABSOLUTE LIGHTBULB MOMENT WHERE I SAID, 'THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO', I WANT TO MAKE DINOSAURS AND GIANT GORILLAS

was in service until about 1991. By then, digital was coming along and so you didn't need that type of motion control work anymore. In 1982, David went on to form Mirage Effects and I went on to form John Cox's Creature Workshop. I was more interested in building the stuff that was in front of the camera.

What kind of stuff?

More organic monster-type things rather than spaceship-y stuff. So David and Mirage, they went one way and did a whole bunch of films, model work and commercials, and I looked after them doing all the sharks for *Dead Calm*, I was known as the animal guy.

Babe was a groundbreaking project for its time, and you were given an Academy Award for your involvement. What was it like working on such a big project?

It was a great project to be a part of. On

had movies on. There was no televised sport and the movies that they would play would be *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* or they meet the Wolf Man or *One Million Years B.C.*, or *Jason and the Argonauts*. All of these great science fiction and fantasy films used to be on every Saturday afternoon. When I was 14, I saw the original *King Kong* – the black and white one – and that was it for me. That was an absolute lightbulb moment where I said, 'That's what I want to do, I want to make dinosaurs and giant gorillas'. So, the next day I went up to Caringbah Public Library and looked up everything I could about how special effects were made in films.

Even though you were first drawn to monsters, you ended up being the 'animal guy'; It's led to some pretty interesting public art projects...

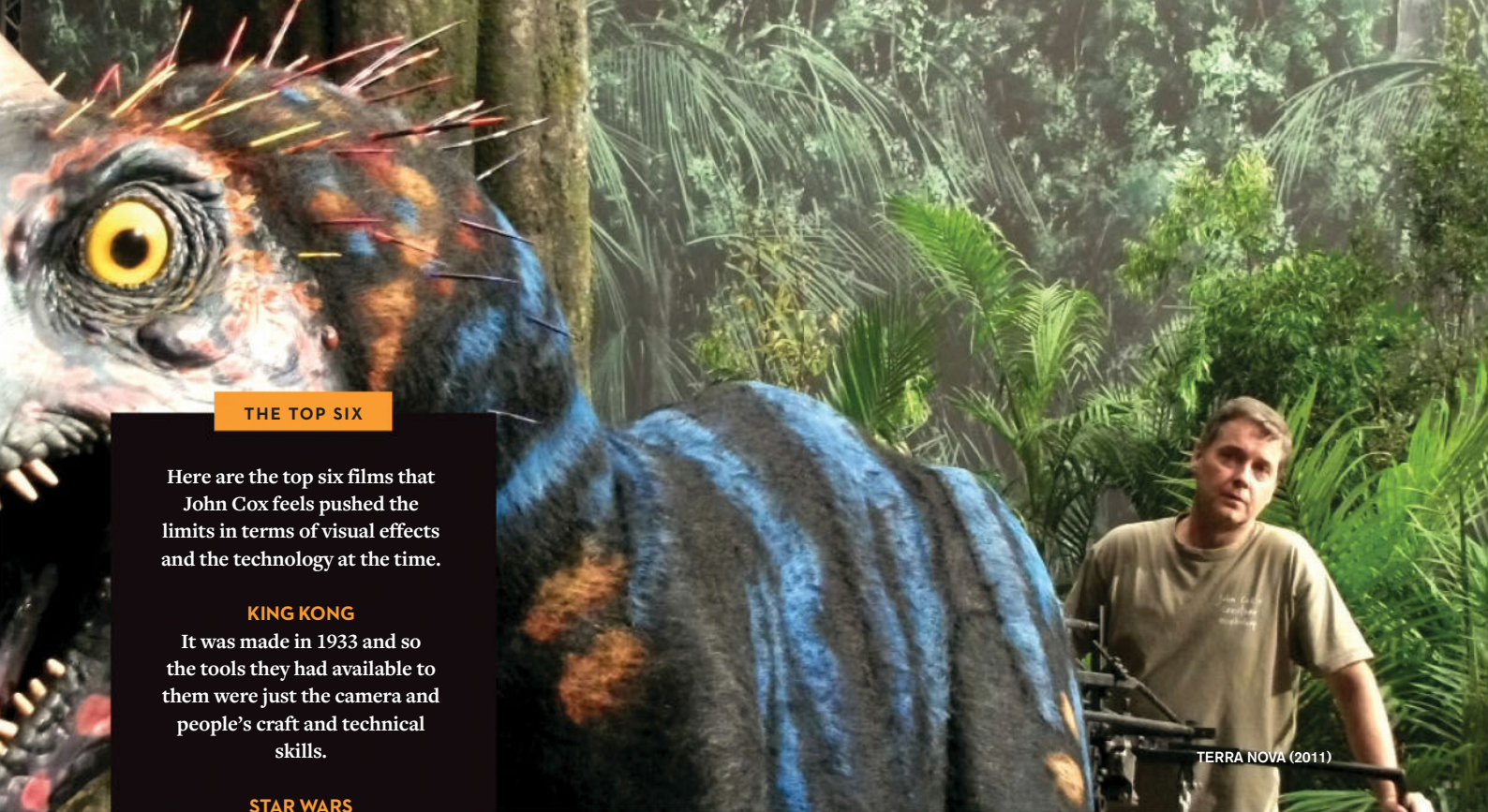
Looking at my trajectory through film, even



PITCH BLACK (1998)



THE HOST (2011)



THE TOP SIX

Here are the top six films that John Cox feels pushed the limits in terms of visual effects and the technology at the time.

KING KONG

It was made in 1933 and so the tools they had available to them were just the camera and people's craft and technical skills.

STAR WARS

It was just groundbreaking in so many ways. It opened people's eyes to the next wave of filmmaking.

THE ABYSS

Because of the water tendril which was a massive leap forward in 3D work for filmmaking.

JURASSIC PARK

They absolutely brought dinosaurs back to life.

BABE

Because of the blend of the technologies we used. I know what we did and how cutting edge it was.

TRON

The first one, because of its really innovative use of early computer animation.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

The first one. Actually the first two movies were just spectacular. Anything was possible after those films. Peter Jackson hadn't just done everything digitally and it all blended perfectly.

crocodile was able to do absolutely everything. It was just spectacular but the entire sequence was cut from the film before it was even shot.

What happened?

The director was two weeks behind filming with the kids and one of the American producers said, "We've got to cut our losses here. You've got to concentrate on the kids and the crocodile cave scene's got to go." So instead of shooting for five days for the entire sequence where the crocodile is introduced as a character in the film, they gave the second unit five hours to shoot a close-up on his eye opening and that was it. That's all that was in the film.

Which of the films that you've worked is your favourite?

My favourite film that I've worked on would be *Babe*. Everything about the film was great: the crew, the locations, the end product. Sometimes you do work on shows that don't end up looking like what you had hoped they'd look like. The film that actually took us most by surprise was *Pitch Black* because it was shot in pitch black and we really couldn't see much of what we were shooting and we sat in the cinema and saw the finished product and went, "Was that what we worked on?" (Laughs) Because it was just fabulous, they really did such a

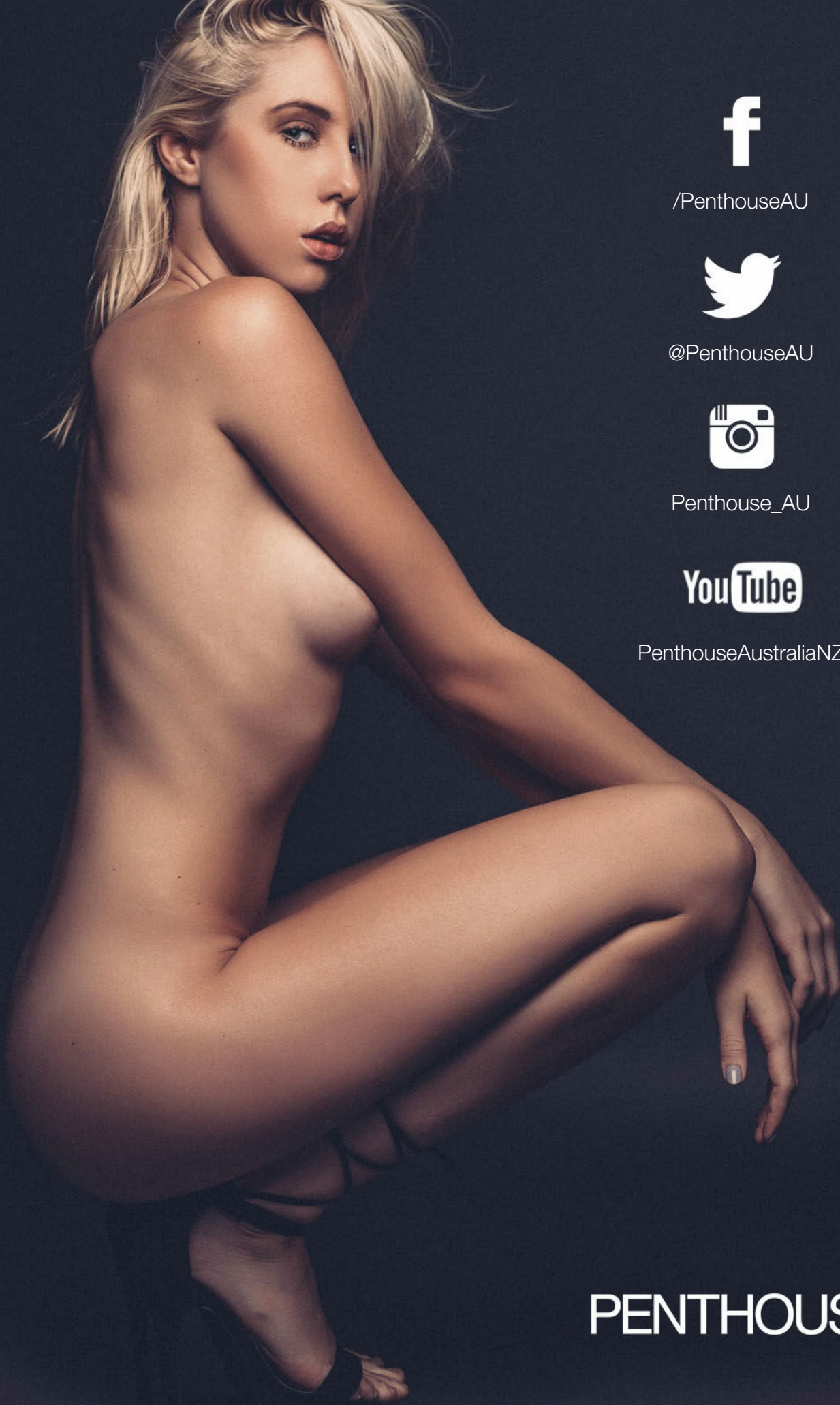
wonderful job with that movie.

Who are some of your influences?

Ron Mueck, an Australian who does large-scale hyper-realistic people. His work is spectacular. As for 2D artwork, there are so many illustrators. Frank Frazetta is first on the list, followed by JC Leyendecker, Maxfield Parrish, NC Wyeth, Norman Rockwell, a lot of Disney stuff. I really love the design work that they're doing with all of their creatures at the moment, like *Zootopia* – the design work on that was just gorgeous.

Speaking of Disney, I recently saw an advertisement with one of those Na'vi creatures from the movie *Avatar*. It involved a very lifelike animatronic. Do you think that advances in technology are going to bring animatronics back to the film world?

I hope so. One of the four guys who received an Academy Award with me for *Babe*, Neal Scanlon, he was working for Henson at the time. He's sort of been enticed out of semi-retirement to look after all of the animatronics and creature work in the *Star Wars* movies. So they're currently doing lots of work with creatures, people in suits and remote controlled animatronic heads and stuff. That's where it is at the moment in film, which is great. ❶



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SPORT

GET YOUR BACKSIDE TRACKSIDE

EVERYONE KNOWS THE GREAT RACE – THE BATHURST 1000 – BUT THE ICONIC COUNTRY TRACK HOSTS ANOTHER EVENT WHICH BRINGS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT AUDIENCE.

BY KARL PESKETT

TOO much orange. Holland's national colour is splashed across houses, boats, pathways and people. On one day a year, the Dutch go nuts. It's called Koningsdag (King's Day), and nearly a million people cram into Amsterdam to celebrate national pride. The ensuing bedlam leaves behind mountains of rubbish so thick that it makes the Ganges look like a crystal-clear spring.

There's only one other place in the world that rivals Koningsdag for the amount of garbage left behind – Mount Panorama's Bathurst 1000. Each October, bogans in their thousands descend on Australia's favourite track, and the mess that gets left in their wake makes even the most hardened garbos shudder in fear.



SUNRISE OVER SKYLINE



Come February, however, the scene changes. The abusive, beer-fuelled Ford and Holden factions are replaced with a more cultured crowd. These are people who actually pick up their rubbish and place it in the closest bin.

The carpark is devoid of Deni-Muster utes, V8 Falcons and Commodores, the bogan-mobiles replaced by a fleet of European muscle: Bentley, Lotus, Jaguar, Aston Martin, Mercedes-AMG, BMW and Audi are all interspersed throughout the car park. The usual cry of "Show us your tits!" is conspicuously absent, yet the eye candy isn't limited to fast metal; the women who accompany these exotic machines are among the finer things in life.

This is the Bathurst 12 Hour, and it's the closest that the Central Tablelands of New South Wales comes to mimicking Monaco. It's car fanatic heaven; walk through the gates, and you're greeted with \$3 million worth of Ferraris on your left, a McLaren and Bentley police car on your right, and just further on, a few mil worth of Benzes and Bimmers.

Walk over the flybridge that spans the track, and you might hear three massive bangs as the cars underneath change up a gear. Hurling toward the first corner, the whine of the sequential gearbox increases in pitch, but then they're hard on the brakes, changing down again. As they rocket up the mountain, the engines sound like someone's stomped on a grizzly bear's paw. And this is just the practice session.

The Bathurst 12 Hour certainly brings the money. Audi, for instance, is represented by seven customer race teams, with each car (the R8 LMS GT3) costing \$750,000 to land in Australia. Audi flew 64 staff across to tend for its machines, with each person spending

THE 12-HOUR TIME LIMIT MEANS ONLY THE BOLD AND THE BRAVE ARE LEFT STANDING

an average of 15 hours at the track each day. Yes, the food bill isn't exactly cheap either.

Come Sunday, the race kicks off nice and early. As the sun rises across the country landscape, the sounds of the engines echo across the valley. The first couple of hours are usually the most dangerous – in previous years, Skippy and his mates have been involved in some nasty collisions during dawn light. Carnage from a shunted 'roo wasn't an issue this year, but there was enough bent metal as cars speared into walls from just the slightest contact.

Small mistakes around here are exacerbated both by how narrow the track is and how close these cars come to each other. If seeing exotic machines being destroyed brings a tear to your eye, then the 12 Hour could have you weeping. But if it's action you want, it doesn't disappoint. The crunch of cracked carbon fibre, the hiss of sand as cars flip, the howl of tyres locking up – the race is a visual and aural feast.

The 12-hour time limit means only the bold and the brave are left standing. Ferrari has taken the crown this time. With Bathurst champions Craig Lowndes, Jamie Whincup and Finnish driver Toni Vilander behind the wheel, the 488 GT3 has covered 1800 gruelling kilometres, and the champers is flowing freely on the podium.

The Bathurst 12 Hour is arguably the most exciting motor race held in Australia, and its rise in popularity is testament to the fact that people are bored with the cookie-cutter series we've had for so long.

As the sun sets behind the mountain, the countryside once again falls silent, awaiting the return of these exotic machines next year. The track can re-open as a public road once more. And thanks to the cultured crowds, rubbish is nowhere to be seen. ❶



LEE HOLDSWORTH SUITS UP READY FOR HIS MARATHON SESSION



ALMOST \$10 MILLION WORTH OF METAL LINES UP BEFORE THE BIG DAY

BURNING RUBBER (AND FUEL)

Quick quiz: Which costs more – fuel or tyres? During the Bathurst 12 Hour race, the normal ratio is flipped on its head. In the three days of practice, qualifying and racing, a typical GT3 car will burn through approximately 1200 litres of race fuel. Forget 98RON; this stuff is expensive. At \$7.50 per litre, that's \$9,000 worth of dino-juice literally up in smoke.

Then, there are the tyres. Each wheel of the car is punished by downforce, crushing the rubber into the tarmac to create the most amount of grip possible. A typical car will destroy 12 sets of tyres over the weekend. At \$900 a corner, that's \$43,200 shredded.

Multiply that by 56 cars, and there's half a million bucks worth of fuel torched and some \$2.4 million in destroyed tyres after the weekend. Sponsors beware: you'll need deep pockets.



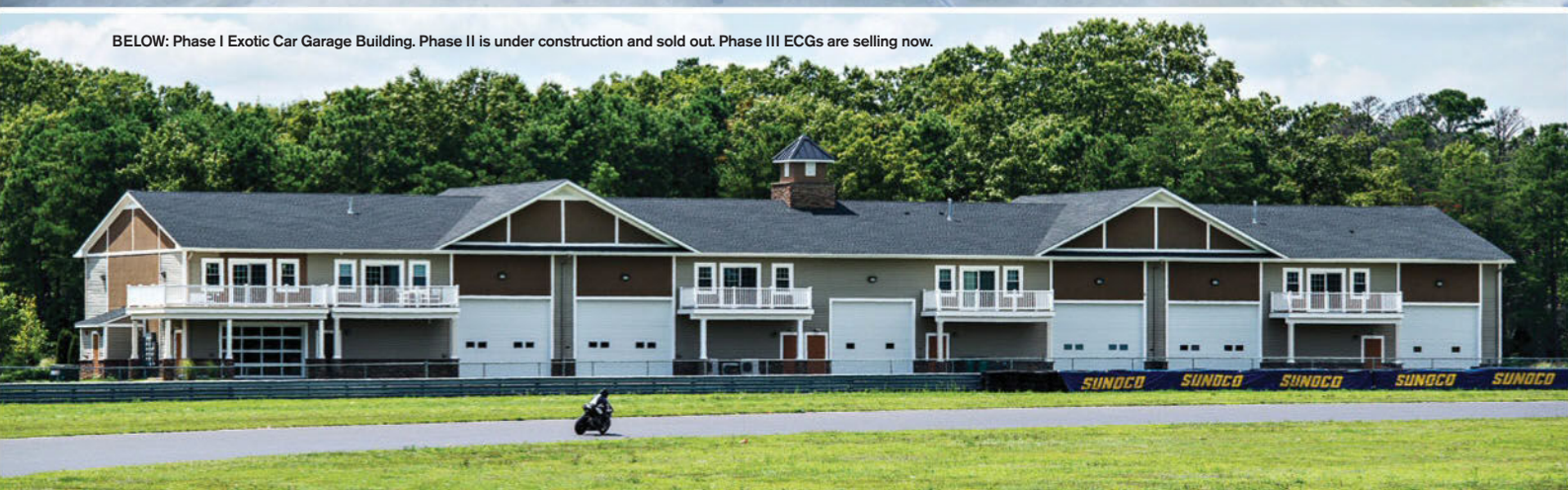
THE FIELD OF CARS MAKING ITS WAY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN



FIVE CARS ATTACK THE ESSES



ABOVE: Owners store valuable performance and vintage cars or motorcycles in NJMP's trackside Exotic Car Garages.



BELOW: Phase I Exotic Car Garage Building. Phase II is under construction and sold out. Phase III ECGs are selling now.



BELOW: Each owner customizes their Exotic Car Garage to suit individual needs and styles.



BELOW: NJMP ECG Owners create luxe lofts and living spaces above garages.

MOTORSPORTS PARADISE

BRANDON HULL OWNS AN EXOTIC CAR GARAGE AT THE NEW JERSEY MOTORSPORTS PARK. IT SOUNDS LIKE A MOTORHEADS HEAVEN.
BY NATHAN HARMOND

BRANDON, is it fair to say that you're living the dream?

Absolutely! New Jersey Motorsports Park (NJMP) is a motorsports paradise for car fanatics. I get to race in club events and track days on two top-notch road courses, as well as indulge in every amenity NJMP has to offer: Clubhouse, pool, tennis courts, pub, gourmet restaurant, paintball field, karting courses – the works. And I have front row seats to every racing event from my trackside Exotic Car Garage (ECG). I sometimes wish I never had to leave! As a racer and motoring enthusiast, I'm incredibly lucky to own such an amazing home for my cars at the same place where I race. I have a place where I can enjoy this great hobby to the fullest.

For those who don't know, tell us about your Exotic Car Garage at NJMP?

My garage is a home base for the Porche Club of America and Sports Car Club of America events I race in. Plus, I'm into restoring antique cars and modifying race cars, so this is the perfect place to do it. I outfitted the garage as a workshop, but it also has a loft entertainment area that sleeps six, with oak floors and a full bath. I believe I have the best ECG spot in the whole Phase I, straight across from Thunderbolt race track's fiendish "Devil" corner (or "Octopus" as some call it). We love to hang out on my deck and watch all the races.

What's in your garage?

I keep different cars there at different times, but currently, I have my 1923 Mercer Raceabout. Mercer was America's first and most revered sports car, and the first American car to win an International Grand Prix race. I also have a Van Diemen Formula Ford and 2 Porsche racecars. Plus, I also store my family's cars there if we need more space at home.

You must have a few parties there? We hear the fridge is always stocked with beer.

Always! I've hosted lots of parties and corporate retreats at NJMP, and we partake in the full suite of events. Nothing builds morale like a couple of laps around a racetrack! I even held my son-in-law's bachelor party at the track. But anyone is welcome to come and have a cold one and talk about cars with me any day.

Your workshop is both a garage and a workshop. Could you tell our readers about it?

I designed my Exotic Car Garage as more of a workspace than a

showplace. I wanted to create a shop where I could service my cars as well as store them, so I made sure I had enough storage for tools and equipment with cabinets and a workbench. I upgraded to a 220 volt electrical and professional-grade lighting, put in two car lifts, an air compressor, welding and a bathroom with an industrial sink and shower. Another huge benefit is not having to trailer my cars to the track because most of the races I run in are at NJMP. I was able to sell my diesel truck and enclosed trailer. Not having to own and maintain large-scale transportation vehicles is a major time – and money – saver for me. And my cars are conveniently stored in my Exotic Car Garage right next to the track.

Do you ever loan tools off your neighbours?

When you become an Exotic Car Garage owner, you become part of an awesome and diverse community of motorsports enthusiasts where something's always happening. Not only do we share tools, but we socialise, and we always look out for each other. Sometimes I even lend my garage to other race teams when they need to make repairs or just take a quick shower. It's all part of the good citizenship that comes with being an NJMP ECG owner. And, although NJMP already has stellar 24/7 security, I installed my own alarm system with cameras to further protect my investment. But, honestly, my ECG neighbours are the best security of all. You won't find a nicer, more interesting group of folks anywhere else. It's truly like living in a motorsports village!

Tell us a little bit about your obsession with cars?

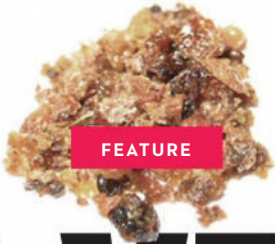
I've been a car guy my entire life. My dad and uncles were into hot rods and sports car racing. When I started racing, everything else just fell into place; it evolved from a pastime into a passion. I'd rather be a participant in the sport than a rub-and-scrub guy, and owning an NJMP ECG not only gives me that opportunity but seriously amplifies it. There aren't many places where you can drive a 100-year old car on a race track!

Finally, what's your favourite car to race on the track?

The original, air-cooled Porsche 911 is possibly the winningest chassis ever built by any car manufacturer. At the same time, it was a tricky chassis, with its engine hanging way out in the back and it has what we would describe today as a primitive suspension system. My old-school 911SC is not the fastest or most valuable car I've owned, but driving it at its limit is certainly the most rewarding racing experience! 



AN OPIUM FARMER IN THE HILLS OF GUERRERO WEIGHS HIS
NARCOTIC HARVEST FOR SALE TO DRUG CARTEL BUYERS



FEATURE

ORO VERDE (GREEN GOLD)

TUCKED AWAY IN THE ISOLATED MOUNTAINSIDES OF THE MEXICAN STATE OF GUERRERO, POOR COMMUNITIES OF FARMERS HAVE TURNED TO PRODUCING OPIUM FOR THE DRUG CARTELS.

BY ALASDAIR BAVERSTOCK

TO the trained eye, an opium field isn't difficult to spot. It's the colour that gives them away: speckled with purple and crimson, the jade-green meadows look otherworldly on the steep hillsides of the high Mexican sierras where they sit alongside larger plots of avocado and peach in an effort to hide the valuable crop from the choppers.

Look closer and you will see the harvesters. Children are preferred for this work. Armed with only a razor blade and plastic cup, they are more agile on the sheer slopes around their mountain villages, and their smaller hands are ideal for delicately scoring the opium bulb to let the narcotic paste seep slowly out.

"It's very hard work, and it's all about patience," says Arturo Lopez, as he gently scrapes the latex from the cut around the seedpod's surface. Holding it up to the sunlight he nods his approval at this half gram of sticky gum.

"Oro verde," he smiles. Green gold.

Arturo, 58 years old and originally from Mexico City, has been farming opium in these remote mountain villages of western Guerrero state for 40 years. It's one of Mexico's most inaccessible regions, though Acapulco remains one of the Pacific coast's more popular resorts.

Having arrived here as a government forestry engineer, Arturo saw the first poppy fields spring up as the drug cartels from the north expanded their operation southwards, decreasing their dependence on Colombian opium.

When his government forestry department was shut down, Arturo stayed, marrying a local woman and seeking employment in the mountains where his expertise could be put to use.

Having gone native, he has consecutively been town

mayor, regional hospital director, and founder and chief of the Guerrero Opium Farmers' Union, which recently defied Mexico's federal government by refusing to stop cultivating poppies, harvesting the opium and selling it on to narcotraffickers.

"Of the 50,000 people who live in this region, 90 per cent of us harvest and sell opium," he says, looking out over the rolling hills from the town's only restaurant, from where the state capital Chilpancingo, 2,000 metres lower in altitude, is visible in the distance. "Every mountain village in Guerrero produces opium, and our entire economy depends on it. By this point, there's no turning back."

Guerrero produces more than half the raw material that fuels the US heroin epidemic, causing 13,000 drug-related deaths a year. The state alone is the world's third biggest producer of opium, behind Afghanistan and Myanmar.

Opium first arrived in North America with Chinese railway labourers, who established plantations in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains on the continent's west coast, from Oregon down to Sinaloa in Mexico.

As the United States cracked down on the opium dens of San Francisco, the country's civil war saw a surge in demand for morphine, and both the Union and Confederacy turned to Mexico for its painkillers. History repeated itself during World War II, when neutral Mexico supplied American military hospitals with opiates.

Thirty years later, as the drug cartels began to supply the United States with Colombian cocaine through Miami, and Mexican marijuana via California, entrepreneurial Latin Americans took advantage of the American government's crackdown on The French Connection – opium from Turkey, turned into 'golden brown' in Marseille and then trafficked

through New York.

Today, two types of heroin dominate the North American market. 'China white' from Colombia is a highly processed and purified powder found on the Eastern Seaboard; and Mexican 'black tar' (heroin acetate, or homebaked heroin), dominates the Pacific side and the US-Mexico border from California to Texas, where heroin seizures have jumped 150 per cent since 2010.

In Mexico, narcotics were traditionally produced in the Golden Triangle, an area of western Mexico including the states of Chihuahua, Durango and Sinaloa. In these labyrinthine highlands that raised Mexico's most famous drug kingpin Joaquin 'El Chapo' Guzman, marijuana and opium were grown with impunity.

As the Sinaloa Cartel established its dominance across Mexico, its captains, based in Acapulco, noticed that the remote hills and high altitude of the interior would be ideal for opium cultivation.

Going from village to village, the drug cartel brought seeds and knowledge of the brightly coloured plant to the impoverished farmers of the sierras, promising great rewards to those who would supply opium at the end of their harvest.

Fuelled by the ravenous demand and enabled by a corrupt state police force and weak judicial system, opium production exploded in Guerrero. Today, an estimated 30,000 acres [12,000 hectares] are given over to poppy fields.

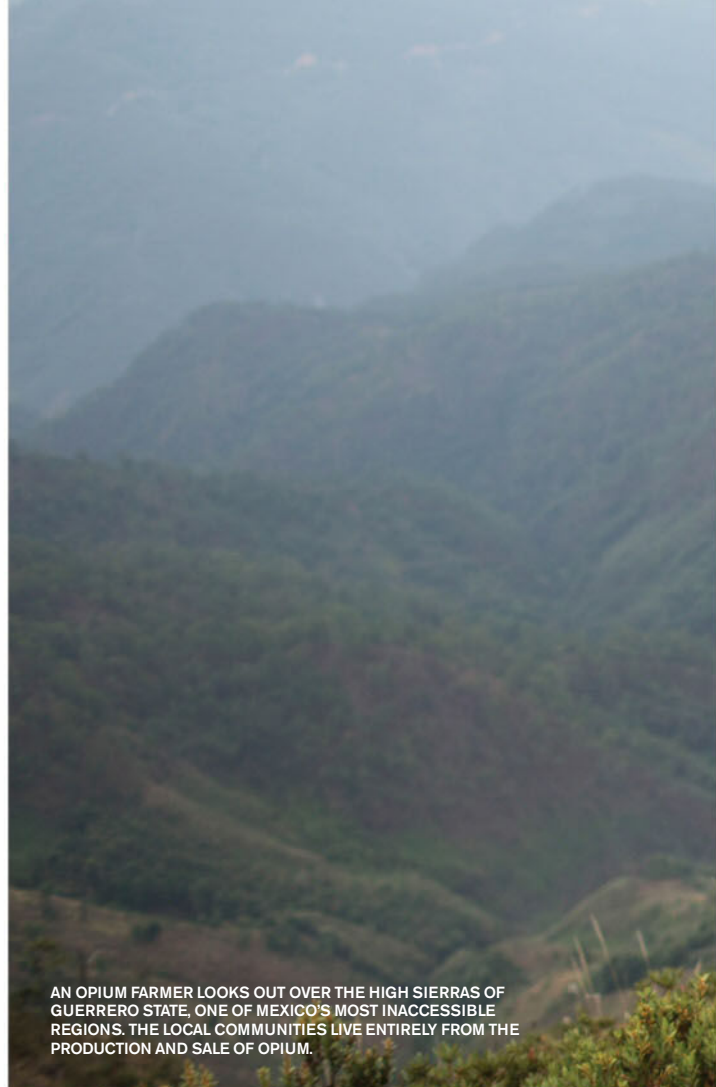
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When Arturo arrived in the sierras 40 years ago, just 2,000 farmers were involved in opium cultivation. He now estimates his union is 45,000 strong – nearly double the size of Mexico's Marine Corps.

The state produces more than 60 per cent of Mexico's total opium output, and despite being a large producer of the narcotic, its consumption is non-existent in the sierras, save for a small amount for toothache relief. It all goes north to supply the ever-increasing demand for heroin in the United States.

"We know the opium eventually does harm, but we can't ignore the demand, and we are so far removed from the death that we feel innocent enough," says Arturo. "We literally have no other option. For us it would be ridiculous not to cultivate poppies."

The United States' issues with heroin have been worsened significantly by the availability of pharmaceutical opiates, most notoriously oxycodone, nicknamed 'hillbilly heroin'. Seventy five percent of regular American heroin users came to the drug through prescription medication, which becomes too expensive and difficult to get hold of for pain sufferers-turned-



AN OPIUM FARMER LOOKS OUT OVER THE HIGH SIERRAS OF GUERRERO STATE, ONE OF MEXICO'S MOST INACCESSIBLE REGIONS. THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES LIVE ENTIRELY FROM THE PRODUCTION AND SALE OF OPIUM.





THE OPIUM HARVEST IS A LABOUR INTENSIVE PROCESS,
WITH EACH BULB GIVING UP JUST A FEW GRAMS.



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addicts, many of whom make the obvious move to cheap and readily available Mexican black tar.

And there's no need for users to buy on street corners in dodgy parts of town, as Mexican cartels in the US now deliver direct to your door. The most successful illicit narcotics organisation in history, the Sinaloa Cartel controls the North American narcotrafficking process all the way from manufacture to sale, in a heroin market worth more than US\$8 billion a year according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

In 2008, Mexico produced an estimated 38 metric tons of heroin; less than a decade later, Guerrero alone can export 150.

"Everyone here harvests opium," says Arturo, "If it wasn't for the poppy, these mountain communities would have disappeared long ago."

The opium crop produces two harvests a year: the end of the dry season in March produces a concentrated opium gum, worth US\$1,000 per kilo, while the rainy season's product, gathered at the end of September produces a greater quantity, but a more diluted paste, worth just US\$300 per kilo.

Most residents in the region will cultivate two hectares of poppies at a time, which yield a minimum of 20 kilos per year: generating an average annual income of US\$13,000 from the cultivation and sale of opium. For those who still farm fruit and vegetables, a ton of peaches is worth around the same as a single kilo of opium.

The farmers themselves are a humble group, and see little of the huge profits reaped by the drug cartels from the sale of heroin. While a farmer can see as little as US\$5,000 for enough raw opium to manufacture a kilo of black tar, the street value of the same package on the streets of Chicago can reap an average of US\$80,000.

In the higher reaches of the sierra, their villages have no electricity or running water, the closest mobile signal is a four-hour drive away, and the sharp relief blocks even long distance radio waves. Before opium poppies arrived in these villages, the traditional means of providing for their families was to migrate to the United States and send money back. But today, as more US deportees return to the sierras and President Trump promises crackdowns on illegal immigrants, opium has become the stabilising factor in the local economy.

"The more Trump talks about cracking down on Mexicans, the more joy the deportees take in their work," grins Arturo.

Ironically for such a deadly and illegal product, aside from its inherent value, opium paste is an ideal cash crop. The opium poppy is a hardy plant, resistant to changing weather, and a single pod produces more than a thousand seeds which can still be sown even after the opium has been extracted, exponentially increasing consecutive harvests.

Opium is also light; an entire harvest can be carried easily in a rucksack from remote hidden plantations on steep hillsides, while a ton of avocados, worth roughly the same, requires heavy machinery and good roads, neither of which are abundant in the high sierras.

On top of that, it's an enduring commodity. If a buyer is not

found for a batch, it can be buried in the ground and stored indefinitely, while corn and peaches spoil quickly. Fruit and vegetables must also be transported to market; for the opium, the narcotraffickers come directly to the farmers.

The buyers are the only contact the farmers have with the narcotrafficking chain. Wiry young men, they are often natives of the sierras in which they trade on behalf of the cartels. A good knowledge of the mountains and cultural understanding with the locals are prerequisites for the job, and much of the commerce is done on foot.

Journeymen traders, the buyers catch public transport from village to village through the badlands. Armed with just a pistol and bundles of cash, they negotiate with the farmers to fill their backpacks, before descending to a cartel laboratory in one of the towns in the foothills, where 15 kilos of opium are made into a single kilo of heroin.

The cartel presence is not always welcomed in the sierras, and farmers will not do business with more than one narco buyer at a time for fear of negotiations turning violent. Although the Sinaloa Cartel controls the narcotrafficking chain from the laboratories to the street dealers, the high volume of opium produced within the mountains has resulted in a number of smaller gangs from mountain communities becoming active.

Of the 56 active drug cartels in Mexico today, 24 are based in Guerrero State alone. Los Rojos, Los Arillos, Guerreros Unidos, Los Tequileros, and SIDA to name a few, are all competing in the business of trafficking opium.

The situation has resulted in much violence. The more remote settlements have seen whole communities kidnapped within their villages and forced into slavery by gangs who steal entire harvests. Shootouts are common in the access towns to the sierra, where the shot-up sandbags of army outposts conquered by cartel enforcers litter the roads. Most

notoriously, 43 protesting students disappeared in 2014 at the hands of the Guerreros Unidos gang in the strategic town of Iguala, whose mayor was also the cartel's boss.

In addition to contending with gang violence, the farmers are under constant threat from Operation Condor, the Mexican army and marines' joint mission to wipe out opium crops from the air using herbicides sprayed from low flying aircraft.

Having started as an aerial photography program to map uncharted areas of the sierra in 1974, Condor quickly became a government mission to destroy opium production on a large scale.

Helicopters and crop-dusting planes fly low over areas of opium cultivation identified by satellite photography, spraying paraquat dichloride, a viciously effective herbicide entirely banned in Europe, which unselectively destroys plant matter upon contact and is water-resistant within minutes of application. The scorched land can take years to recover from the substance's effects and the chemical, linked to the development of Parkinson's disease, is highly toxic to humans, and has no known antidote.

Guerrrerense communities who drink from water sources

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that run through sprayed fields have reported respiratory problems, liver, heart and kidney failure, and in cases of prolonged exposure to contaminated substances, death.

"The government thinks of us as criminals, and treats us as a wartime enemy," complains Arturo, who says he has witnessed military planes spraying paraquat dichloride over areas known to contain natural water springs from which communities drink. "We are not narcotraffickers. We are just trying to feed our families."

Despite government efforts to control opium production in the mountains, the sierras are impossible to police. In the past two years Arturo's farmers' union has established its own vigilante police force, which communicates the entry of any unknown persons into its mountain chains, and forcibly refuses access to any outsider who has not previously been granted permission. For a journalist to enter, two months' notice and committee approval are required.

So inaccessible are these high mountain villages to the Mexican authorities that 'El Chapo' Guzman was reported to have hidden out here, in the remote village of Corral de Piedra, following his 2015 tunnelled escape from Mexican high security federal prison.

Arturo says that despite government efforts to curb their opium production, that the sierra residents will always win.

"We are in 60,000 square kilometres of mountains, which we know better than any outsider," he says. "If it comes to guerrilla warfare, the Guerrerense are the baddest of Trump's 'bad hombres'. The government won't stand a chance."

"Even without the threat of government crop destruction, narco takeover and hungry local animals eating your crop, the process of producing opium can be very expensive."

"First you have the labour costs of preparing the land. Territory sprayed by the government is useless, so you must find a new patch of land and clear it by hand. The best plots to avoid detection will be two hours' walk into the sierra to decrease the chances of discovery."

"If you have various fields, as most people do, then you must keep them small and separate. That way, if one is discovered, you don't lose your entire harvest. It is also a good idea to surround your opium crop with taller avocado and peach trees for camouflage."

"Once your crop is ready, it takes five men four days to harvest a single hectare, by which time on top of the fertiliser, herbicides and labour costs, you've already spent half your earnings from a batch of opium that hasn't yet been sold."

The farmers live a hand-to-mouth existence, using their earnings from the valuable dry season sale to last them the rest of the year, hoping that drug cartel activity in the sierras doesn't worsen so much that they end up kidnapped in their own towns.

Guerrero is now North America's most murderous state, with about 60 murders per 100,000 residents annually – four times the Mexican national average – while rates of

kidnap, femicide, disappearance and extortion are higher than any of the war zones on the northern border. Caught between federal anti-drug policy and the suffering of the impoverished farmers, the Mexican government finds itself in an impossible position.

The issue has become such a problem for Guerrero that last year the state governor Héctor Astudillo compared his region to Afghanistan.

"We are the same place," he told the Mexican national media. "Except we are one state and they are an entire country."

In the same breath Astudillo informally floated the idea of legalising and regulating the production of opium, a proposal that was ignored and ridiculed by the country's Federal Congress in Mexico City.

Astudillo however has remained firm, championing the idea across the state in his political visits. The governor first came to office through the forced resignation of his predecessor following the scandal of the disappeared 43 students, and his first 100 days in office saw 734 homicides throughout the state. "If you can't beat them, at least find a way to tolerate them", he says.

Jorge Hernandez Tinajero, a founding member of the Collective for an Integral Drug Policy, an independent body which seeks an end to the decade-long drug war that has cost over 100,000 lives, is doubtful that regulating opium production is the silver bullet that will put an end to the state's narcotics problem.

"On a global level we already have a surplus of medical opiates, and we don't see an increasing demand," he said from his office in the south of Mexico City. "Of the 800 tons of medical morphine that were produced last year, only 500 tons were consumed."

"If Mexico were to go into business as an opium exporting country, it

would find that shifting its product would be very difficult."

Arturo also admits that while legalisation would put an end to much of the violence, moving away from selling produce on the black market would ultimately affect his union's bottom line.

"We look at it in terms of profit," he said. "No one who can get a thousand dollars for selling a kilo of opium to a narco is going to sell it on to the government for a quarter of that and then pay taxes on it."

"Ultimately it's better for us as a farmers' union if opium cultivation remains illegal... We'll take our chances."

As Guerrero's opium production grows exponentially by the year, Arturo says he sees no end to the industry in his beloved mountain village.

"We live happy and peaceful lives up here, and as long as our union is strong, then we have no reason to fear," he says. "Most of us here don't even know what the opium is even used for. We just know it's valuable."

"God help us when the younger generation finally work out they can smoke it straight out of the plant," he laughs. "That's when we'll really be in trouble." 

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THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY IS EXPECTED TO HELP IN THE HARVEST, BUT FEW HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHERE THEIR RAW PRODUCT ENDS UP.



11/50

IN
FOCUS
**JEFFREY
THOMAS**





EQUIPMENT:
CAMERA BODIES:
 CANON 5D MK IV
 CANON 5D MK III
LENSES:
 CANON 70-200 2.8L
 CANON 50MM 1.2L
 CANON 85MM 1.2L

JEFFREY THOMPSON is a photographer from Southern New Hampshire, near Boston.

"I went to film school at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and currently maintain a video production company along with my photography career. I have a pitbull named Wilson and a beautiful girlfriend named Maddy who models and is an amazing photographer as well. I love cooking, traveling, photography, filmmaking, and whisky."

What differentiates nude photography from porn?

Intent. I think the grey area between the two is cleared up by a photographer and model successfully creating a piece of art.

Do you think we've hit a new era in the sense of how we react to sex and nudity, or are we the same as we've always been?

Hell yeah, I think we're loosening up as my generation gains power and older generations have less control of content. There is nothing wrong with female boobs. We all have nipples, we aren't going to hell for waking up and seeing nudity on our Tumblr feed.

Should more women be in positions of power?

Jesus Christ, yes. Us dudes have had enough of a chance fucking things up. It's time for a more rational approach.

What is the craziest shoot you've worked on?

Probably a music video I shot on Long Island where the main actress was fully nude the entire time. It was cold and entirely too public.

What scares you the most in the world?

Missing out.

What's your favourite whisky?

I'm not a whisky snob so I'll drink cheap bourbon and love it, but I'm definitely into single malt like Ardbeg or Nikka. Right now I have a Balvenie Doublewood that is really awesome.

Favourite movie to unwind to after a big day?

Wes Anderson is my favourite director, the *Star Wars* trilogies are my favourite movies, I love romcoms way too much, but *The Graduate* is hands-down my favorite movie to relax with. It's like an old friend.

Finally, if we ever visit Boston, where is a good place to grab a beer?

Anywhere! Boston is a college town and we love to have a good time, but our bars close way too early, so be prepared to find an after-party. ①

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HIGHLIFE

74: JAPAN GETAWAY

Hot nights out in the Land of the Rising Sun



80: MASTERS OF DISGUISE

Silent assassins: We catch up with a real-life ninja



88: TECH FROM JAPAN

Hi-tech, lo-tech and just plain weird tech: Japan has it all







EXPLORING JAPAN

TOKYO CALLING

WORDS BY SIMON SCOTT

JAPAN stands out among nations for its complex and refined traditions which stretch back thousands of years and a visit there would be wasted without experiencing the country's fascinating culture and history. Luckily, you don't have to wear your shoes when out around the thousands of temples of Kyoto or practicing the ancient art of the tea ceremony which makes watching paint dry seem like a fun and fast experience, in order to get your Japan culture fix. Leave the cherry blossom viewing for next time when you take the other half. Where there is high culture, there is also low, and there is plenty of that in Japan too. So why not have a bloody good time and a few brews with the boys while plumbing the depths of the real culture of the Rising Sun.

BOY'S NIGHT OUT IN SHINJUKU

To experience all the weird, wild and wonderful things that Japan has to offer, there is no better place to start than in Tokyo's legendary Shinjuku district. Shinjuku is Japan on steroids, and it's the entertainment epicentre of the country – the scale and density of the place is without comparison. You could spend a 100 life times in this city within a city and still never discover all her secrets. Like an old set of Chinese boxes, every time you open one another smaller box appears containing yet another secret.

ARRIVE AND DRINK: SHINJUKU STATION

The first thing you need to do after arriving at Shinjuku Station is to get the fuck out of Shinjuku Station. It is insanely busy. This is not a figure of speech. It is by far the busiest train station in the world. The population of some entire countries pass through here in one day. According to the Guinness Book of Records, in 2011 an average of 3.64 million visited the station per day.

Anyway, the thing to do here is look around and say, 'wow, I've never seen so many people walking so fast in my entire life', take a quick crowd selfie, and then immediately head out onto the street, find the nearest 7-11, buy a cup of cheap sake, drink it quickly and decompress. The station has 200 exits so it is not hard to leave the labyrinth, but which one...

**EAT AND
DRINK:
PISS ALLEY**



Recommendation:

Ozeki "One Cup" Sake (180 ml, 15% alc.) -

Where: 7-11 near Shinjuku St., or at any of the million or so convenience stores in Japan

How much: 225

EAT AND DRINK: PISS ALLEY

Mother says, that before a night on the town, always line the stomach first. If you are going to hit Kabukicho – the nerve centre of adult entertainment in Japan, both naughty and vanilla – later (and trust me you will), in this case mother really does know best. And there is no better way to keep her happy, than eating lots and lots of succulent, well barbequed meat.

So, if you do manage to escape Shinjuku Station – after thanking Jesus, Buddha, Allah, or the poor Japanese businessmen with broken English you accosted for directions who ended up having to walk the entire length of the station with you just so you could find the right exit – head straight for Omoide Yokocho, which is very close to the western side of the station.

These two narrow alleys are a throwback to Shinku's rough and tumble, post-war past and are jam packed with over 60 greasy-spoon restaurants, most of which are specialise in yakitori, or the pretty much any type of meat that can be cooked on a stick.

These grimy establishments are, and always were about hard drinking. Beer and shochu are the staples here, and nothing makes this point clearer than the area's historical name of Shoben Yokocho (which most locals still use today), which directly translates as Piss Alley. Back in the day there were no toilets in the area, so after hitting the shochu hard after a day's labouring, the area's stumbling, blue-collar patrons pissed in the street and the smell of urine was ever-present. Thankfully, things have moved forward since then and a decent set of public toilets were installed after a fire in 1999, which destroyed much of the area and lead to a rebuild. The laneways were given a facelift (its official re-branding as Omoide Yokocho, or Memory Lane, was part of this clean up and probably also an attempt to whitewash its "colourful" past).

It still hasn't lost its old, low-class charm, though, and is especially good after dark when the smoke from the dozens of charcoal grills running all at once fill the alley with clouds of thick smoke which swirl and drift through the rows of dimly lit red lanterns and the distinctive odour of roasting meat is ever present... A smell, I think we can all agree, is a lot more preferable to piss.

Recommendation:

Part of the pleasure of eating here is slowly wandering through



SING AND DRINK: KARAOKE



the laneways and sampling a stick or two of yakitori at one grill then a plate of barbecued pork at another. Most places have grills facing the street so you can just follow your eyes or your nose. Pretty much all the places here offer the same thing, anyway, grilled meat on a stick.

● SING AND DRINK: KARAOKE

The chances of finding a bar in Tokyo where you can do karaoke is about as hard as finding a pub in London with crap food. Karaoke has ingratiated itself so deeply into the fabric of Japanese nightlife that it sometimes feels like it's following you and your evening around like a badly dressed stalker with a gigantic collection of B-grade, 80's radio music. Trust me, here, this will not be a case of the cunning and sultry karaoke muse seducing even the shiest lad to pick up a microphone. This is Japan! Karaoke will get you in the end, so it is best to be properly prepared. In other words, drunk enough that you won't remember how crap at singing you are.

Thankfully Karaoke is a hell of a lot of fun (as long as you are not sober) and the options and variations of how to play this very Japanese sport are truly endless, especially in Shinjuku's district of sin, Kabukicho. But if you are not content with simply making a fool of yourself in front of a bar full of red-faced Japanese businessmen who, no matter how drunk they are, will be better

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHINJUKU: THE YAKUZA, COMMERCE AND THE RAVAGES OF WAR

After years of relentless carpet and incendiary bombing by American B29s, most of Tokyo, once one of Asia's most modern and developed capital cities, was mostly a flat wasteland of black, charred rubble. Most of its millions of broken inhabitants were disorientated, homeless and starving, as were large swathes of the rest of the country.

Then suddenly, on the 20 of August 1945, a mere five days after the Empire of Japan surrendered to Allied forces, an outdoor market appeared out of nowhere on the west side of what was left of Shinjuku Station, offering a vast and impressive array of goods. Aptly nicknamed Hikari wa Shinjuku yori, or "The Light which Shines from Shinjuku", the market quickly mushroomed and multiplied to cover most of the station's surrounds. It stood as a beacon of hope for the desperate citizens of Tokyo suffering terribly from the war.

But lurking behind the market's optimistic facade was that same sinister, dark force which still to this day controls most of Japan's criminal underworld. Hikari wa Shinjuku yori was a black market (the very first of many in post-war Japan), and most of the merchandise was stolen from secret supply depots set up during the war. It was owned and operated by the Kanto Ozu-gumi crime syndicate, a division of Japan's infamous yakuza, which controlled Western Tokyo at that time. And as the market grew and became increasingly profitable for the unscrupulous gangsters running it, service industries catering to the ever increasing number of customers also began to flourish. Food stalls and makeshift bars selling boot-leg grog soon appeared, soon followed by the time-old, yakuza vice industries of prostitution and gambling. Right from Shinjuku's re-birth as Tokyo's business and entertainment capital, the Yakuza were there planting their crooked roots and

taking their sizable slice of the pie and continue to do so today.

The Yakuza, although still a powerful force, operate increasingly more in the shadows in modern Japan, their activities, at least in Shinjuku, have long been largely limited to the infamous 600 meter square block of sex and sin known as Kabukicho, where it is estimated over 1000 yakuza members still operate and control around 120 businesses.





DRINK AND BAR HOP: GOLDEN GAI



at singing than you, then you need to see a specialist. This means visiting a dedicated karaoke house and renting a private room for you and your mates. There are dozens of them in Kabukicho ranging from the large, multi-story karaoke franchise outfits which are ubiquitous across Japan, (such as Shikax and Karaoke-kan), to smaller, private outlets, many with new and random themes and angles on the old game.

Recommendations:

KaraokeLand

Where: Kabukicho 1-14-4 Daini Kaneshima Bldg.

Times: Open 24/7

Although not nearly as flashy or high tech as the big name singing houses, this place is a rarity in the karaoke world because you can BYO food and drink. They also have costume rental (yes, they have a range of Japanese high-school girl's uniforms), so there is a danger of stag night type antics occurring here. People have been known to walk in here with bottles of whiskey and come out in body bags, so bring mixers and food. You have been warned!

Trips for young players:

1. Do not wear jandals or flip flops – Karaoke is a contact sport in Japan, and like all contact sports it can be dangerous. There is a high risk that an intoxicated person will dance on a table with beer glasses on it and breakages will occur. Take sensible shoes.
2. Be very drunk. Doing karaoke sober is like root canal without anaesthetic.

● DRINK AND BAR HOP: THE GOLDEN GAI

The honourable and ancient art of bar hopping usually involves at least a bit of exercise, even if it is just a walk a few minutes down the road to the nearest corner pub. In Shinjuku's Golden Gai drinking district it is not even necessary to make this degree of effort to get to the next wateringhole – a good thing considering how strong the cocktails are in this part of town. The bars in this unique, grid of six narrow alleyways located on the eastern border of Kabukicho are so crammed that you could almost pivot from the last one to the next by putting your landing foot on the pavement once, kind of like preparing for a pass in netball. Let's not try that, though. It's probably better to leave the acrobatics for those athletes who haven't spent the last two hours dropping cocktail glasses in karaoke rooms.

Oh, and, I should probably mention, there are fair few more bars in the Golden Golden than on your average high street – over 250 in fact – so it is probably worth being a bit selective here. Even the sturdiest of livers have their limitations.

The remarkable thing about this legendary block of Shinjuku real estate is not just the number of establishments, but the fact that most of them have unique and different themes, many of them colourful and wacky, making the whole area like a Disneyland theme park for alcoholics. The variety is endless and ranges from a noisy Sex Pistols-style bar that exclusively plays punk to more chilled, retro-chic places with, say, a Showa jazz coffee house or art house cinema vibe, to the obsessive, quirky-Japan novelty bars stacked with nerdy curios, like animation character models or toy train sets. And for those who don't really give a fuck about the wallpaper of the place, or where they get drunk, there are also bars which don't seem to have a special theme at all, but just sell good, cheap drinks or have friendly, chatty owners. There is even a ramen restaurant or two, for when you get hungry at the end of the bender. The Golden Gai has your back!

3

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EXPLORING JAPAN

MASTERS OF DISGUISE

BY KRIS MADDEN

S HINTARO and Tombei are seen on a cliff. Suddenly Shintaro is pushed of the cliff by Tombei, who is actually Toma, a master of disguise.

If you are a fan of the 1960s cult Japanese TV series *The Samurai*, as I am, then you'll know what I'm talking about. This was my first introduction to the world of the Japanese ninja, the secret assassins of medieval Japan. It's all very James Bond, including gadgets such as star-shaped weapons, and the ability to jump backwards onto buildings.

On a recent visit to Japan, I wanted to see if I could find someone to teach me these dark and mysterious arts. Not just hear about them – actually become a ninja.

Tada Naohiro is a real-life ninja of the Musashi clan.

As I enter the Jidai Academy Dojo in a leafy Tokyo suburb, he has his back to me and seems to be bowed before an altar. His face and head except his eyes, are completely covered by his nifty black ninja outfit. In the darkened room, he is almost invisible. I wonder to myself where he sticks his mobile phone.

Before I slip into the same get-up, I want to know his credentials. How did he become a ninja? And what are the work prospects like?

The Musashi clan is made up of families who served the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate from the 1600s as intelligence operatives called metsuke (inspectors) and onmitsu (spies). These days, the clan offers training in ninja and samurai traditions.

The art is more than learning the physical skills of the martial arts. It is also about physical conditioning and discipline. Our session begins with a meditation that gives a ninja the power to block out everything except the task at hand. I learn the kujikiru, a sequence of hand gestures that summon spiritual and mental strength, enhance your awareness of danger and enable you to foresee death.

Naohiro then pulls out a whole box of fun ninja toys. There's a heavy chain that can be disguised as prayer beads, a machete, and a doll whose head pops off to reveal



PHOTO: BOY CH







NINJA ONLY CARRIED WHAT WAS SUITABLE FOR A MISSION, A FEW SPIKED METAL DEVICES TO STOP WHEELED VEHICLES – OR ONCE, HORSES – AND A SMALL MISSILE OR TWO

a poison-soaked needle. Even a humble pair of chopsticks can be fatal, which I'll remember next time I'm at an Asian restaurant in Sydney. He explains that while most of them look like they would inflict intense pain, many originally had other purposes. Take the kunai blade, for example. It was designed as a shovel, not only for digging, but climbing, lock picking, and even cooking – almost everything except stabbing someone.

I'm excited that, just like the Iga ninja of my young imagination, he has deadly throwing stars (called shuriken), though they come in all sorts of shapes.

"Most of what you see in *The Samurai* series is rubbish," says Naohiro through an interpreter. For example, in the TV version, the Iga ninja throw huge numbers of star-shaped shuriken. "A ninja would only carry one of these, close to the heart to protect it."

"Ninja only carried what was suitable for a mission," adds Naohiro. "A few spiked metal devices to stop wheeled vehicles – or once, horses – and a small missile or two. A ninja's ultimate weapons were the element of surprise and disguise."

He gives me a poke to the chest with his finger, sending me spinning backwards. "From the front," he says, "humans are vulnerable". I swivel my torso from side to side, switch feet, and practice moving like a cat. Jumping over a small hurdle is no problem – doing it silently is almost impossible.

"Many ninja texts write that you should watch animals and study their movements," says the master, wielding a sword with the lightning pace of Luke Skywalker. "To fool security guards, ninja could bark like a dog. They would take risks regardless of what their instinct told them."

The comfy black tracksuit-like pants and top I'm wearing are reversible, so you could wear them inside out to deceive the enemy – or in my case, maybe sleep in them. On TV, ninja Toma could impersonate others, looking so much like them that no one ever seemed to be able to tell the difference. That's a talent that would be handy.

I send poison darts and spit down the blowgun, nearly cut my head off with the razor-sharp sword, and stealthily stumble behind a secret door, before finally learning the secret symbol that will help me identify other real ninjas.

There is a chance to practice my new skills (the non-lethal ones) at the World Heritage-listed Nij Castle in Kyoto, by slinking between rooms where old Japanese carpenters showed their workmanship by creating nightingale floors that deliberately squeak, to catch out sneaky intruders.

I'd tell you more, but then I'd have to kill you.

Check out:
Jidai Academy Tokyo www.musashi.ninja



EXPLORING JAPAN

SUMO: BELOW THE BELT

BY TIM HORNYAK

If you've never watched two titanic sumo wrestlers crouch down in front of each other, lock eyes and then collide in an explosion of heaving muscle, blubber and samurai topknots, you're missing something quintessentially Japanese.

As Japan's national sport, sumo wrestling has a history that stretches back some 1,500 years and is deeply imbued with ritual, spirituality and bone-crushing physical struggle. The rules are as simple as Thunderdome – two rikishi wrestlers enter the sacred dohyo ring, and whoever gets pushed out – or touches the ground with anything other than his feet – loses. Bouts are over in seconds.

Sumo recently got a big shot in the arm when Kisenosato became the first Japanese yokozuna, or grand champion, in 19 years. Foreign grapplers such as the legendary Mongolian Hakuho had dominated amid the sport's waning popularity in Japan. Another of these foreign hopefuls is Osunaarashi, a 25-year-old Egyptian born Abdelrahman Ahmed Shaalan, whose ring name means "great sandstorm" in Japanese. At 189cm tall, tipping the scales at 158kg and having defeated two yokozuna in 2014, he has lived up to that moniker.

"As the first professional sumo wrestler from Africa, I feel a lot of responsibility in everything I do and say," says Osunaarashi from Osaka, where he is training for the March basho grand tournament and managing a leg injury. "Everyone is watching you closely."

Rikishi lives in stables headed by a retired wrestler referred to as oyakata. For a year as a junior wrestler, Osunaarashi lived like a servant, waking up at six, readying the 9-metre-long mawashi loincloths for his seniors, cleaning the training room, preparing lunch for everyone and then cleaning the entire stable. As a salaried sekitori-grade wrestler now, he has it a bit easier but still trains more than four hours a day and lives by strict rules. He must be courteous in public, dress only in traditional attire, adhere to a 10pm curfew, abstain from making controversial statements and give up driving cars. On top of that, Osunaarashi is the only Muslim in professional sumo and sometimes tournaments coincide with his Ramadan fasts. Despite all that, Osunaarashi acknowledges that some wrestlers live up to the popular image of superhuman rikishi who down gallons of sake and party with adoring female fans.

"How much time wrestlers spend on that is all up to the individual – it depends how badly you want to succeed at sumo," he says. "I'm focused on how to survive and manage my body. I have my own technique and my own style, and I want to pursue my dream of becoming yokozuna."



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HARAJUKU

EXPLORING JAPAN

STYLE: HARAJUKU VS TOKYO JOE

Harajuku

If you ever needed proof that Japan is a little bit nuts, then a stroll down Takeshita Street in the world famous district of Harajuku should offer up plenty of evidence. Considered the centre of Japanese youth-culture and fashion, this region has set the tone for every major style movement in the country since the 80s, and more recently has found notoriety abroad, with more and more trends popping up in western culture.

With the ever-changing fashions (mostly female-oriented), the distinctive looks each follow a particular style; namely Lolita, Gothic, Fairy Kei and Kawaii to list a few. You can be forgiven for thinking you're looking at a comic book – to the untrained eye they all look an awful lot like Cosplay. While the girls get about dolled up like Sailor Moon on acid, the guys here wear just about anything, as long as it's flamboyant.

From shiny, slim-fitting suits and top-hats to combinations of texture and colour that'd put an IKEA catalogue to shame, looking like an anime villain is the goal and androgyny is A-OK. One might argue the irony that it takes a lot of balls to step out of the house in pants this tight.

Tokyo Joe

Unquestionably more restrained than its Harajuku counterpart, Tokyo's inexplicable obsession with post-WWII Americana runs deep, and its effects are ever-evident in Japan's booming fashion industry. The country's denim is now considered the highest quality in the world thanks to brands such as Edwin, Big Blue Japan, Samurai and Big John.

While you might think that sentiments towards the US would have been less than sympathetic when Elvis was shaking his hips, the zeitgeist in Tokyo was quite the contrary, with rock 'n' roll topping the charts and police-chases between James Dean wannabes on loud motorcycles and irate cops a regular sight.

Today, it's the combination of hi-end selvedge denim and huge greased quiffs that defines the scene, which is steadily growing. Sundays in Tokyo's famous Yoyogi Park see the Rockabilies come out of hiding as they gather to dance to old-school American hits from the 50s and show off their moves.

If girls have the quirky stylings of Harajuku as a unique form of expression, then this is how the men of Tokyo forge their own identity, comb in hand. It may be an anachronistic, borrowed style, but like everything they do in Japan, they've certainly perfected it.



TOKYO JOE



EXPLORING JAPAN



HI-TECH

Panasonic's invisible TV

When is a TV not a TV? When it's not a TV. Though this futuristic telly is probably not going to hit the market for a few years yet, Panasonic have dangled a pretty sizeable technological carrot here in the form of this magically disappearing television screen.

By incorporating an OLED display into the glass sliding door panel, they've managed to make the whole thing invisible to the naked eye when it's not in use (similar to their translucent touch-screen fridge-doors, but with much better resolution).

The screen also works even if the cabinet behind it is back-lit and as far as we can tell, it's the best thing to happen to television in Japan since any one of those weird dating game shows where men endure electric shocks or ice cold mud in hope of dating the pretty girl at the end.

Wearable Biological Clock Regulator

Okay, bear with me on this one. This may look like the weirdest, most impractical invention we've ever featured, but it solves a problem in a way that only a Japanese invention could. This headset might make you look like the baddie from an 80s film, or a member of Daft Punk, but by wearing it for 30 minutes first thing every morning you'll be set for the day no matter what your sleep patterns.

Essentially bathing the user's eyes in artificial morning light, the Luce Glass Wearable Biological Clock Regulator (they couldn't find a suitable acronym?) is designed to wake up even the sleepest of slumberers and cure them of their jet-lag, insomnia or irregular sleeping patterns. If you can get past the space-age design and \$570 AUD price tag, then it looks like the simplest way to put your waking-up woes behind you and get on with the day.



TYPE OF KNIVES USED
BY JAPANESE CHEFS

/ YANAGI

/ FUGUHIKI

/ TAKOHIKI

/ USUBA

/ KAMAGATA USUBA

/ DEBA



EXPLORING JAPAN

LO-TECH

Chefs' Knives

While European knives are traditionally thick, heavy weapons designed for making short work of chicken bones and root vegetables, the Japanese have long been famed for the sharpest cooking implements in the world, and they're far lighter than their continental counterparts.

Mostly coming from Sakai, the original home of badass accessory and Japanese icon the Samurai sword, blacksmiths turned their craft to making culinary accessories after carrying swords was banned in the 19th century.

Made from incredibly hard, lightweight steel, they're much easier to sharpen than most other chefs' knives and are suited to delicate knife work such as that required for, you guessed it, slicing raw fish.

Though some producers have experimented with modern materials and new alloys (one of which is actually called Blue Steel, Derek), the most traditional examples are still made from folded steel by the skilled hands of the master swordsmiths.

Barware

If you fancy yourself a bit of a dabster behind the stick, then you'll already know that Japan long-ago took over as the producers of the best barware in the world. Crystal mixing glasses, gold-plated cobbler shakers, fancy stirring spoons, beveled bitters bottles and copper and stainless versions of just about every booze-related implement of which you can think are all part of the country's repertoire of cocktail accoutrement.

They're also pretty au fait with custom ice blocks for each drink – for a small price you can easily get yourself an ice saw and folded-steel paring knife and have a go at carving out large ice diamonds for your next whisky. Alternatively, save time (and your fingers) with a brass ice-mould that melts large ice rocks down to shape on-demand. With cocktail culture exponentially on the rise in Japan, this low-tech genre is still being honed and improved.



EXPLORING JAPAN

SPY-TECH

USB PORT

1920X1080 RESOLUTION

CAMERA



Camera Watches

Straight outta every James Bond film is the quintessential spy accessory, the spy watch. Gimmicky spy cameras in disguise went out of fashion almost as soon as they came in during the tech boom due to their low-resolution and unreliability, but Japan have seen to it that spyware can be both functional and discreet, as well as surprisingly affordable.

Watches like this start at as little as \$25 AUD, they can record up to 5 megapixels for hours on a single charge, support expandable storage, capture 30fps video, create stills and crystal clear audio and still tell the time.

The majority of them are even waterproof, so next time you're diving and have to fight off a giant squid with nought but a Swiss army knife, you can capture the moment and prove to your mates that you're not telling tall tales.

Spy-Tech Camera Glasses

Cameras hidden in just about any everyday item are big in Japan, be it teddy bears (a la *Wolf of Wall Street*), car keys, pens and even buttons, though none are quite as simple and science-fiction in the same breath as these spy glasses.

A little bit Harry Hart, a little bit Clark Kent; these spy glasses might look like child's play, but are among the highest resolution and most discreet of the professional snoop's toolkit. While the lenses are false, the thick black frames house the guts of the recording equipment, which can film and store up to 90 minutes of video and audio as well as snap multiple stills, all the while making the wearer look like an innocuous hipster. Or librarian. Perfect for your next undercover meeting, assassination or, lets be honest, about a thousand other more questionable (and fun) applications.





EXPLORING JAPAN

WEIRD-TECH

Armpit Fan

'Chind gu' is the Japanese art of inventing ingenious everyday gadgets that, on face value seem like ideal solutions to particular problems, but in practice cause too many new issues or such significant social awkwardness that effectively they have no practical application whatsoever. Think upside-down umbrella that collects rainwater or a feather duster that also makes cocktails (for the housewife who like a little gin on the job).

One such concept is this here armpit fan. Designed to clip on the bottom of any short sleeve, the micro-USB or battery powered fan cools the wearer's underarms by blasting fresh air through their shirt. It can also be clipped to the front of the shirt for a whole-chest refreshing experience and will cool the user for up to nine hours on a single charge. Would we ever use one? Absolutely not. Have we already ordered two of them each? Of course.

Toilet Noise Blocker

Though shame was traditionally the worst thing you could bring upon your family or fellow warriors on the battlefield in Japan, their eschewing of it is still alive and kicking today, albeit mostly in the form of social faux pas and daily encounters.

Here is just one of the many odd solutions to problems we didn't know we had. This battery powered device plays the sound of running water at 80dB while you go about your business, literally. It masks the sounds of all calls of nature to the prying ear and, as some people apparently used to continuously flush the toilet to hide the inevitable noises of their movements, it's also an environmental hero, saving copious amounts of water. While this one here is designed to stick on the wall, there are personal keyring-sized ones also available for the discerning chap who likes to enjoy a crap on the go.





EXPLORING JAPAN

LIVE LONGER, EAT LIKE THE JAPANESE

THE Japanese live longer than people in most other developed nations. In Japan, the life expectancy is 87 years for women and about 80 years for men. A 2016 study by The British Medical Journal of 79,594 Japanese adults found that people who adhered to the official governmental dietary guidelines had a 15 per cent lower mortality rate.

They're also not as fat as the rest of the world. Figures from 2013 showed that 3.3 per cent of Japanese women were obese, compared with 20.9 per cent of women in Poland, 33.9 per cent of women in the United States, and 48.4 per cent of women in Egypt.

In the midst of a global obesity epidemic, the Japanese have the lowest obesity rates in the developed world – 3.3 per cent compared to 28.6 per cent of Australians. They also have lower rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and some (but not all) cancers. Maybe the Japanese are on to something.

So, what's the secret? It is believed that the Japanese diet – filled with plants, vegetables, fish and complex carbohydrates – is the cornerstone of their good health. Incorporate these Japanese staples into your diet, eat better and live longer.



RICE

RICE IS NICE

In Japanese, the words for 'meal' and 'rice' are the same. In other words, the Japanese diet is built on a solid foundation of rice, and they eat the starchy grain with practically every meal. The complex carb will leave you feeling satisfied, reduce overeating, and quell sugar cravings.

ADD A BIT OF MISO TO IT

This soy product is incredibly good for your gut health. The Japanese enjoy it with breakfast, lunch and dinner. Buy organic miso paste and make soup with Australian-grown seaweeds, toss it through stir fries, or use it in marinades.

EAT A DIVERSE RANGE OF FOODS

A hallmark of the Japanese diet is diversity. Their dietary guidelines recommend people eat at least thirty different kinds of food each day. Eating a wide range of food is even better than taking supplements, as the body can process and use the required nutrients more easily.

MISO



MEAT ME IN THE MIDDLE

The Japanese love fish. However, when it comes to other meats, they eat less than their western counterparts. According to the World Health Organisation, a meat-heavy diet is synonymous with increased rates of chronic diseases. If you must eat meat, choose choice cuts and limit your intake.

TEA IT UP

Tea is the country's favourite beverage, and is consumed in huge quantities across the country. High in flavonoids and antioxidants, it helps avoid heart problems and improves the immune system.

GET FAT, EAT LIKE A SUMO

But if that whole living longer thing isn't for you, there is an alternative – the sumo diet. We're doing it – well, the eating and sleeping part at least. We'll leave the intensive training out for now. Loosen your belt; things are about to get heavy. Sumo wrestlers stick to this daily routine to maintain size and mass

1. Skip breakfast. Sumo wrestlers fast in the morning to help keep their metabolism low.
2. Exercise on an empty stomach. The last thing you want to do is bump bellies on a full tum. Also, if the body has no food, it will conserve more fuel.
3. Take a nap after eating. A nice, long post-lunch snooze prevents you burning off too many calories.
4. Go to bed on a full stomach. This encourages the body to store the nutrients in the cells as fat, instead of in the muscles and organs as nutrients.
5. Always eat with others in a social atmosphere. According to researchers, a meal eaten with others can be at least 44 per cent larger and with 30 per cent more calories and fat.



CHANKONABE

Sumo wrestlers eat a particular type of food called chankonabe. It's a stew served in a giant pot, and is the staple of the sumo wrestler diet. Over just two meals a day, sumo wrestlers consume more than double the average human's daily caloric intake – about 4,000 calories. And unlike other sports, sumo isn't seasonal – it consists of six 15-day tournaments every other month – so this diet is year round.

THE SUMO DIET

Lunch

- Chankonabe (made from broth, mirin, sake and soy sauce) with meatballs, tofu, bok choy, cabbage, carrots, green onions, root vegetables, and mushroom
- Rice

Dinner

- Fried mackerel
- Udon noodles
- Salad

FRIED
MACKEREL





EXPLORING JAPAN

DRINK LIKE A... WESTERNER

TO get the lowdown on Japanese whisky, we spoke to the man with the knowledge aka the “drink smith”, Leonard Opai aka Creative Director of beverage for the Terzini group and bar manager at Icebergs dining room.

PH: What makes Japanese whisky unique?

LE: The Japanese do everything properly. From architecture to the preparation of food, they're true artists. They learn from the masters, take it home and refine it. They take real pride in what they do, and it's a reflection of their culture whenever they come up with anything.

PH: What's a good entry point to Japanese whisky?

LE: My two favourites, I suppose, are the two whiskies that brought Japanese whisky to the forefront. The Yamasaki – I believe it's the Suntory brand – they were the first distillers of whisky in Japan in the early 1920s. Then, eleven years later, Taketsuru did Nikka. Much to the disdain of millions of Scots, those have taken the awards for best-blended whisky away from them. For entry level, from the Yoichi distillery try the Nikka, and the Yamasaki, Suntory's flagship. I'd say those would have to be the best. They have a lot more distilleries now, and they put a lot more effort into different types of finishes and stuff, but those are the two flagships that got things going.

PH: What flavour notes should I expect from a Japanese whisky?

LE: They vary slightly and tend to be between a Highland malt and a Speyside malt. [Ed note: Speyside single malts are single malt Scotch whiskies, distilled in Strathspey in northeast Scotland.] They're never quite as full hard and smoky as you

get from the Lagavulin and the Laphroaig, but you tend to get more on the honey aspects and wood, and they import a lot of peat from Scotland so they get a lot of head from there, but it's a lighter style. It's not the big smoky, punchy type like an Oban or a Macallan.

They use fresher spring water which influences the flavour. The thing you need to remember is that this is a family affair. Their great grandfather started making it, they showed their son, who taught their son – generations of wisdom have gone into it.

They take ownership of the brand, and it becomes a part of them. It's an expression of their professionalism; they strive to do things properly. It's quintessentially Japanese.

How should it be enjoyed?

It depends on the environment you're in. In a tropical, hot environment you're not going to go through too much whisky, but when it's cold and dark outside and you want something that's reminiscent of warmth and has a bit of character, that's when whisky goes well. I suppose in winter we definitely see whisky cocktails a lot more – things that are more bespoke, darker spirits. During the summer you're probably going to steer away from most of them unless you have an unwooded rye.

But these days, in order to get their product moving and maintain consistency alongside it, whiskey producers get their reps to go out and say “This is our mixing whisky”, which is generally their entry level, and “This is our premium whisky we recommend with water, ice or neat”. ❶

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SHOOT TO THRILL TALLEIGHA

“THE photographer and I always wing it when we shoot together.

On this day, we found ourselves walking through old Fremantle town. The shoot started with milkshakes and hot dogs, then we descended out onto the street, where we stumbled across this run down arcade that became the feature of our shoot. We played Basketball, *Dunk 'Em*, and raced in the Grand Prix (which I won, I'm a machine behind the wheel ;))

And of course we couldn't go past *Time Crisis*. I've always had a thing for high powered machinery, and although this was a mock gun, I took the shoot out very seriously!

I enjoy gaming, whether it involves playing with myself or watching others play!

I'm a little bit of an adrenaline junkie and slightly competitive, so it's always in my nature to take things to the next level.”

MODEL: PERRYWINKLE PHOTOGRAPHY















05/17



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INFORMER

110: THE ROBOT REVOLUTION

Will a robot be doing your job in the automated workplaces of the future?



118: ANDREA MORELLO

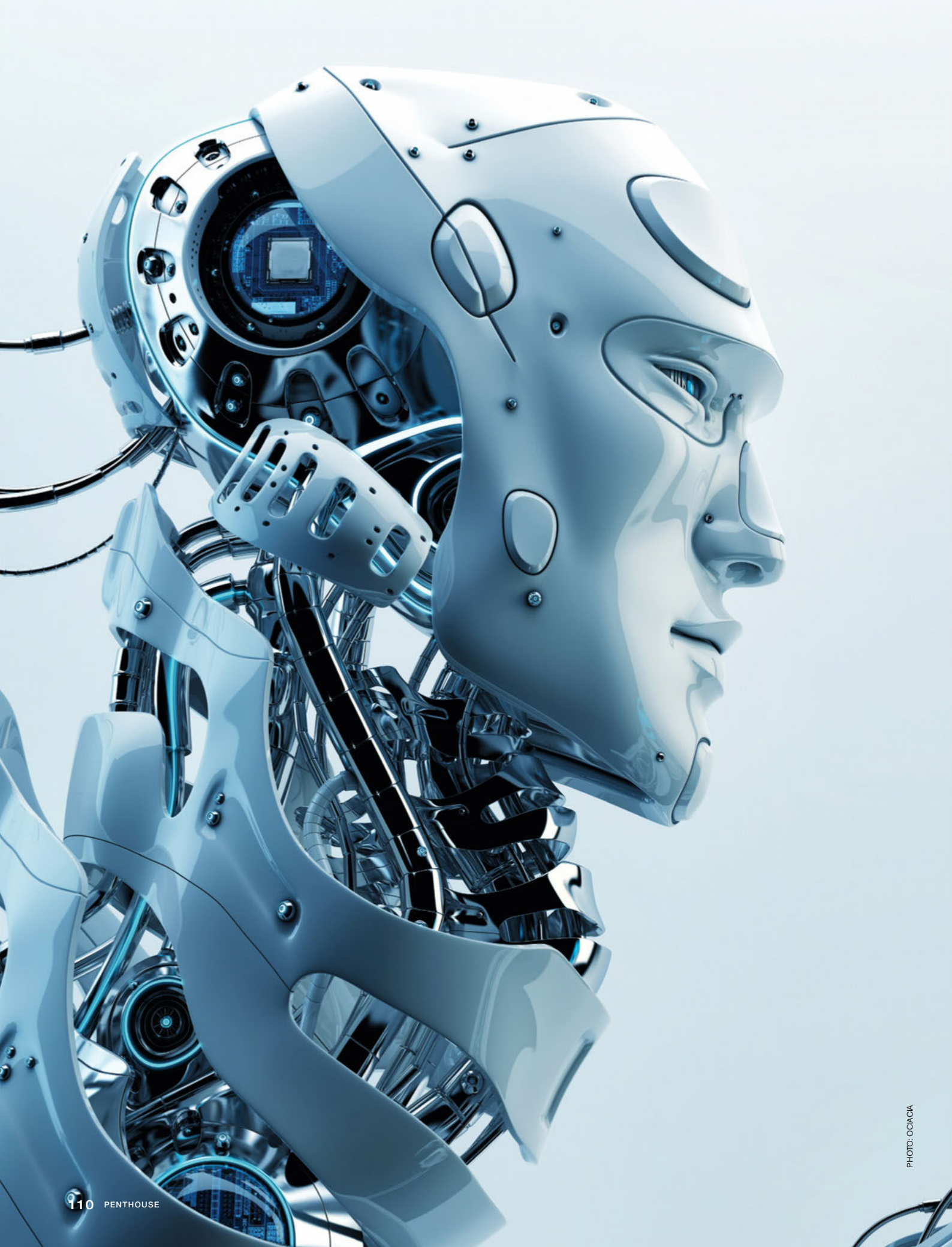
The man at the forefront of the quantum computing revolution



128: BEAUTY & THE BURKA

Should we ban the burka? Or are we looking at this issue the wrong way?

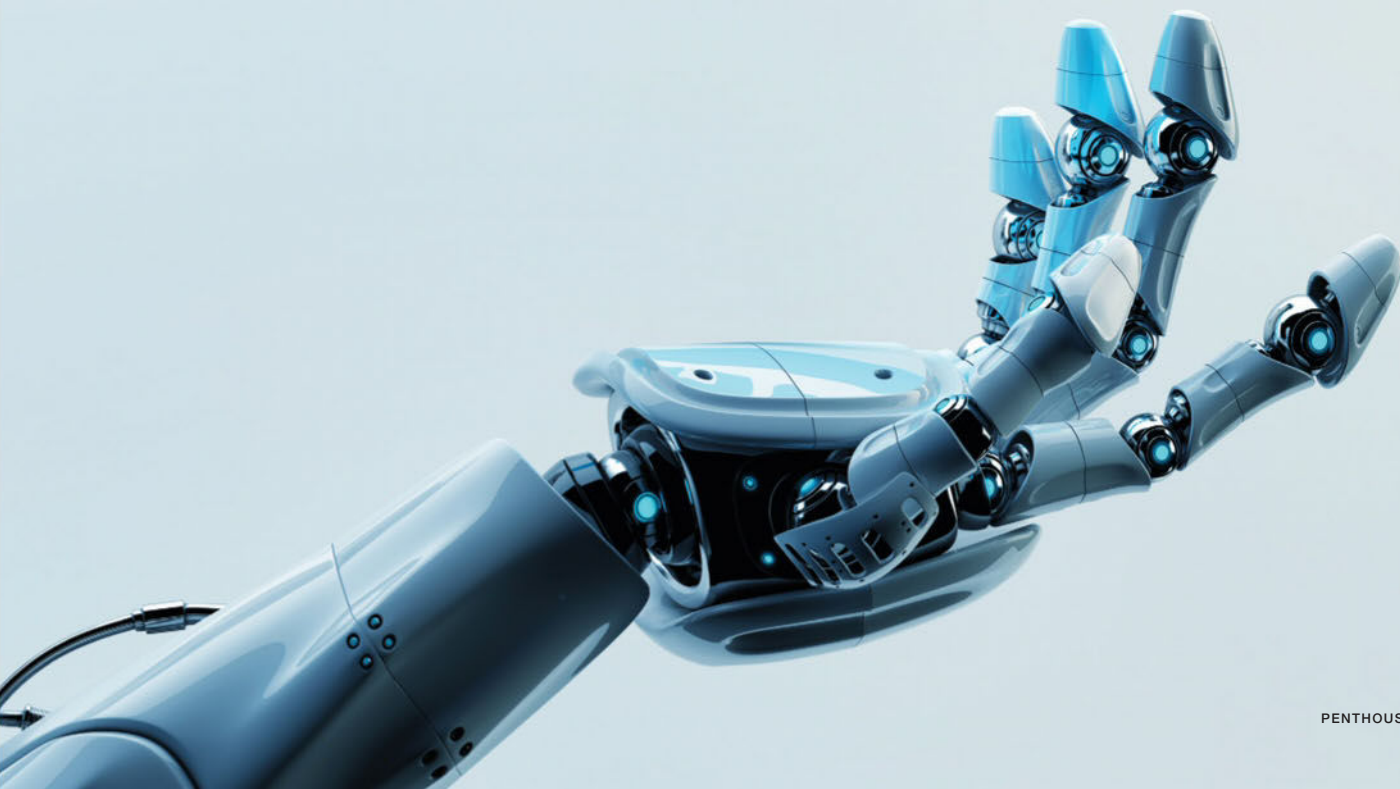




THE REPORT

THE ROBOT REVOLUTION

WILL HUMANS BE OBSOLETE IN THE AUTOMATED
WORKPLACES OF THE FUTURE?
BY SEAN BRUCE.



WHEN the world's most significant tech monolith announces it's going "AI first" you know we're in for something big. And beyond all the dewy-eyed hype that saturates tech conferences in America's Silicon Valley, when the men and women at the coalface of technological advance tell the world that we're on the brink of the next revolution in computing, the world takes notice.

Last October, Sundar Pichai, the 44-year-old CEO of Google, did just this. He explained to a huddled audience of journalists and industry professionals that we're about to see the fourth radical shift in computing. The first shift, he explained, came in the mid-80s with the development of the personal computer. Then, it was the advent of the web, in the 90s, allowing people everywhere to connect in a way that fundamentally changed the world. The third shift, says Pichai, was around 2007 with the introduction of smartphones, which gave billions of people access to mobile computing, and social media hit us. He rightfully points out that these massive shifts come about every ten years. So, if the trend continues, then once again we find ourselves on the precipice of another epoch in computing. And, according to Pichai, this next leap will be in artificial intelligence (AI).

A relatively new computing technique called 'deep learning' is the driving force behind this shift. It's a way of teaching machines to learn, make meaningful connections and solve difficult problems. Deep learning more closely resembles how the human brain works and it is already considerably improving the machines' ability to understand language, identify images and solve problems that usually require a more human intuition. An AI of this kind can help with straightforward tasks like getting directions on Google Maps, but also with more vague requests like: "Play the Blue Swede song from the movie *Guardians of the Galaxy*."

And new products are just the tip of the iceberg. Beyond fancy new iPhones, a whole slew of companies are designing artificial intelligence systems to automate processes normally carried out by humans in the workplace. And while this will undoubtedly increase productivity and profits, critics such as Jerry Kaplan, entrepreneur, futurist and author of the book *Humans Need Not Apply*, think that "we are in danger of becoming roadkill on the so-called information superhighway."

Speaking of roadkill – professional driving is a good first stop to understand the impending effects smart machines are going to have on our workplaces. We're familiar with robots replacing human labour on the factory floor. And just take a quick trip to your local supermarket and you'll be greeted by rows and rows of self-checkouts. But until very recently, robots could not drive cars safely. Now, with improved sensing and imaging techniques, reliable self-driving cars are a reality, and companies like Uber are already trialling them in the United States. It's only a matter of time before the technology is perfected and the need for

human drivers is completely eradicated. Of course, this affects more than just taxi services. Long-haul truck drivers are under threat of automation by a robot that doesn't sleep, can't get sick, theoretically shouldn't crash and won't form unions to demand higher pay. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) asserts the long-haul truck driving industry is set to increase 11 per cent by 2022, driving up demand for drivers, but Kaplan argues that the demand for drivers is likely to drop close to zero.

We can expect to see these changes sooner rather than later, particularly in Australia. To quote from a recent press release: "Rio Tinto is rolling out a fleet of 150 automated trucks at our Pilbara iron ore operations, the world's first major deployment of an autonomous truck fleet... The AHS trucks follow pre-defined courses and navigate autonomously from loading units to dump locations."

These trucks operate 24 hours a day, can work in blackout conditions, and instantly share information about the road conditions, nearby risks and their own intentions. What's more, their reaction time is close to zero, meaning they safely travel within metres of each other without risk of collision.

You don't need to be a futurist to see what's going on here.

According to a report co-authored by the Queensland government transport department and the Australian Logistics Council, the transport and logistics sector employed around 1.2 million Australians in 2006 – roughly equivalent to 13.9 per cent of the national workforce aggregate. The vast majority – around 88 per cent – of those who work in the industry are employed in freight and passenger transport, positions that are highly vulnerable to automation.

You might be thinking your job is safe – that unlike driving a taxi or packing bags, your work requires a more cerebral approach. Don't get too comfortable. While manual labour jobs have been under threat for decades, "We're only seeing the

tip of the iceberg" as Sebastian Thrun, a Stanford robotics and AI professor and self-driving car pioneer told *The Economist*. "No office job is safe." And as Kaplan states, technology "is blind to the colour of your collar".

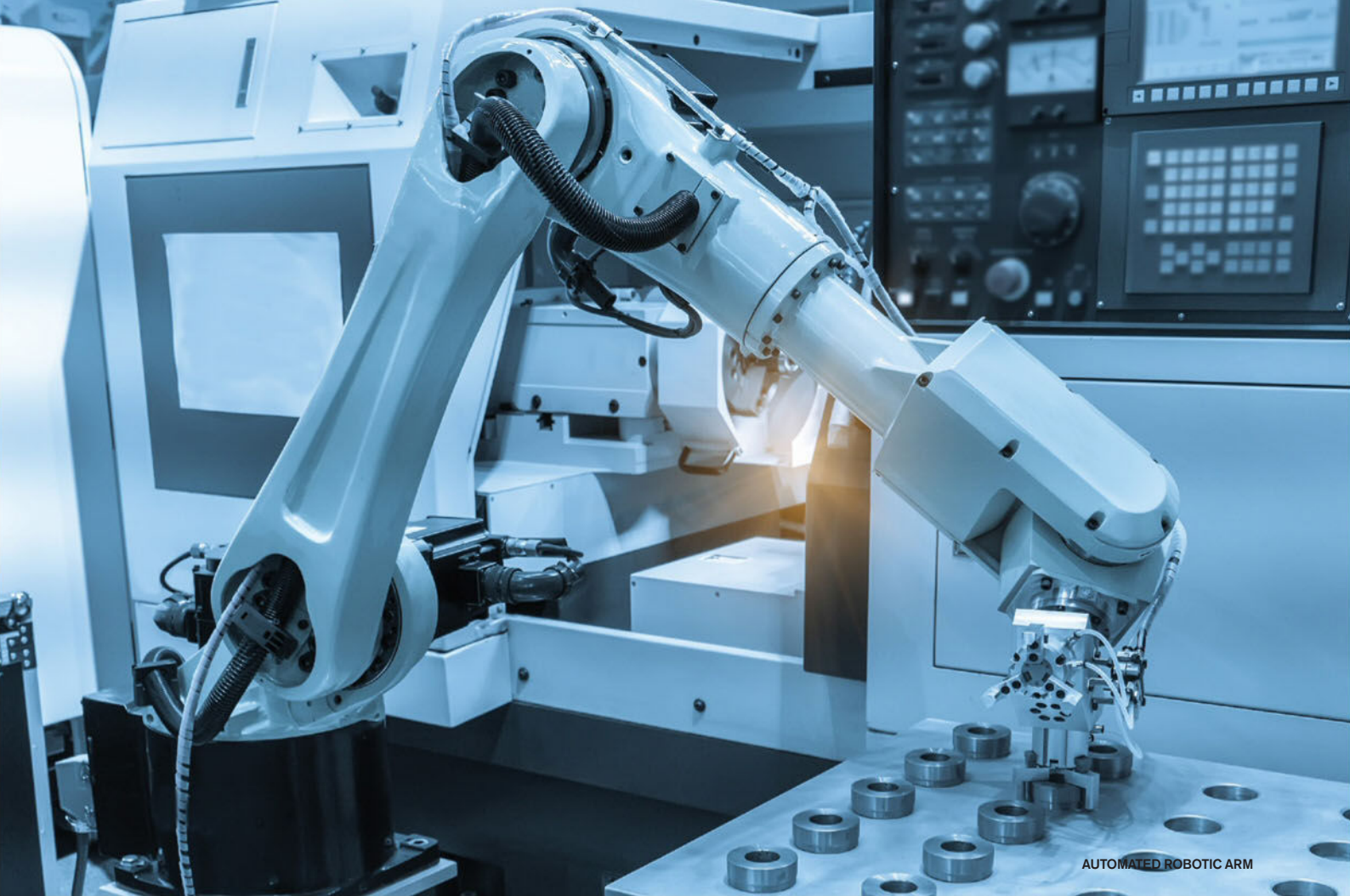
Research conducted by the University of Oxford concluded that around 47 per cent of jobs in the US are at "high risk" of being affected by advances in technology. A similar study conducted here by Startup Aus using the same methodology showed that around 40 per cent of local jobs fall into the "high risk" category and that overall, "Few jobs will be protected entirely from this powerful confluence of technological advancements."

Among the industries most affected, according to the study, are the transport, retail, food and accommodation sectors, but admin, support services, finance and insurance – white collar office jobs – are also represented. According to the report, the key to understanding what kinds of jobs will be affected, is less about the educational level behind the work and more about how routine it is.

For a good example of this, look at the legal field.

Once upon a time getting a law degree meant a ticket to

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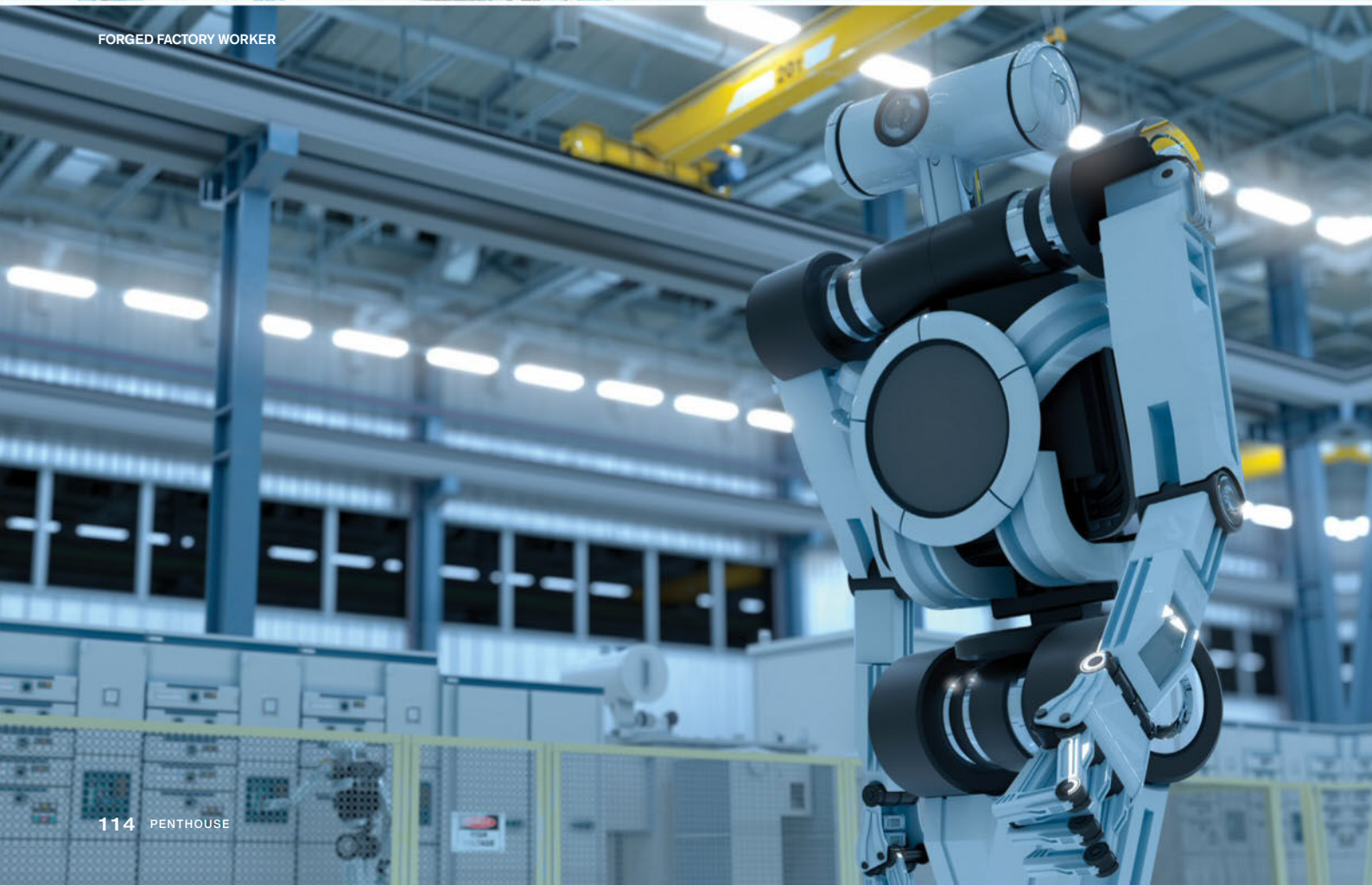


AUTOMATED ROBOTIC ARM





ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MEETS MEDICINE



FORGED FACTORY WORKER

the high life as graduates joined a well-paid and highly respected profession. Graduating students may want to reconsider their expensive law degrees, though. Despite record numbers of graduates passing through the hallowed halls of prestigious law schools around the country, there are fewer jobs for aspiring lawyers than ever before with more than half of top-tier law firms indicating that they will be decreasing their staff numbers in the future. While the global economic recession in 2008 has played its part in the reduction of jobs in the field, the prospects for people wanting to get into the industry are looking even worse in the face of technological advances.

Consider the legal tech startup Judicata. Through harnessing machine learning and natural language processing techniques the company has developed an AI that can convert ordinary text documents about legal precedents or specific texts into structured information about relevant case law. If you wanted to find all the incidents where an Aboriginal person successfully sued on the basis of wrongful termination in NSW, this would save countless hours of research usually conducted by clerks and new graduates.

And this is just one example among countless others. From programs that write up simple contracts to systems that dispense high quality legal advice, the whole industry is about to be shaken up. And while these changes won't completely eradicate the need for a lawyer, they will greatly reduce the need for clerks, assistants and cadets.

Not even doctors are safe. The medical field is also an industry normally associated with a high level of prestige and financial reward. However, already we're seeing companies like Enlitic, which uses deep learning techniques that "can scout for many diseases at once" as well as "provide rich insights in areas such as early detection, treatment planning, and disease monitoring", according to the company website. One of their recent innovations is an AI system that, when tested, was 50 per cent more accurate at identifying malignant tumours than a team of expert radiologists working together. Even more importantly, it had a false negative rate (where a cancer is missed) of zero, compared to the human error margin of 7 per cent. While this technology was born in the bustling tech capital of San Francisco, it's here in Australia where the firm's technology is getting trialled in 40 clinics.

Looks pretty bleak, doesn't it?

But opinions on the severity of technology's impact on jobs vary depending on who you talk to. The first camp – which is predominantly doom and gloom – is dominated by futurists and tech entrepreneurs. They're the people who work at the coalface, developing the machines of the new industrial revolution. They argue that the coming changes will happen so rapidly that the job market won't be able to cope.

On the other side, are the economists and historians. Thinking on this side of the fence is less pessimistic about the labour market's ability to accommodate technological shift. They cite

historical examples to demonstrate that hysteria and anxiety over machines replacing humans is as old as technology itself. They point to the Luddite movement, which was a group of weavers and textile workers in the 19th century that lobbied the government for assistance because of loss of jobs caused by industrialisation. At their most radical, they were known to break into factory spaces and smash the looms that replaced the need for human labour. But as James Bessen, an economist from the Boston University School of Law points out, once processes for weavers became automated, productivity skyrocketed and business boomed as affordable cloth flooded the market. This actually meant that jobs for weavers quadrupled between 1830 and 1900.

The hysteria never quite died down, though. When JFK was elected in 1960, industrial processes were rapidly being automated and computers just started to make an appearance in office spaces. So serious was this threat that Kennedy declared the chief domestic challenge of the 1960s was to "maintain full employment at a time when automation... is replacing men"

In 1961, a piece written for *TIME* magazine was sounding the alarm on automation. Here's a passage from the article:

"What worries many job experts more is that automation may prevent the economy from creating enough new jobs... Many of the losses in factory jobs have been countered by an increase in the service industries or in office jobs. But automation is beginning to move in and eliminate office jobs too." It's remarkable how closely this sentiment resembles what's being penned in countless publications today.

Many economists, including Bessen, argue that computers and automation improve productivity, drive prices down and increase labour demand. In effect, they argue that time and again, technology creates jobs rather than destroys them. A modern example of this is the automated teller machine, the

ATM. When it was first introduced, it was expected to devastate teller jobs. But in fact, the opposite happened. What happens is that technology reallocates labour. So instead of dispensing cash, tellers were able to focus on more customer service-oriented tasks. And while the number of tellers required at each branch fell, the number of branches increased, which meant more overall positions.

Both sides agree that technology will continue to increase society's wealth. The pessimists argue that this wealth will be sucked straight up to the top as the already exceedingly wealthy will be in a position to take advantage of the tech while poor or low-skilled workers will be left behind. There are a variety of solutions being proffered from all sides, from suggestions that governments should pay a universal basic income to more free market solutions such as giving companies tax incentives to train workers for available jobs. But among the diverse opinions on how these changes will affect our society, both sides agree that government and business will need to offer people opportunities to reskill and change jobs as needed. And we will need to have this conversation soon, because the next industrial revolution has already begun. ❶

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 DONE BY HUMANS IN
 THE WORKPLACE**
 ”



ROBOTS, SHMOBOTS

THE ROBOT REVOLUTION IS HERE, BUT HUMANS AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE

BY BRENDAN O'NEILL

THE robots are coming. And while they aren't about to take over the world – as fretted about in many a Hollywood dystopian drama – they might take our jobs.

It's the great fear of the 21st century: automation will elbow aside the humans who currently drive you to work or serve you at McDonald's and force millions of them on to the dole queue.

The headlines speak for themselves. "Automation is coming for your job", says one Blade Runner-like media spread. "Job apocalypse!", newspapers cry, conjuring up images of zombie machines frog-marching pesky humans out of the workplace and into a lifetime of watching crappy daytime TV on the couch.

Experts warn that vast swathes of the workforce will soon be surplus to requirements. Researchers at the University of Oxford reckon 47% of jobs in the US could be automated "relatively soon". We're heading for a future "bereft of jobs", says American professor Robert Reich.

Driverless trucks will do haulage, smiley machines will take your food orders, drones will deliver your mail. We'll have a gadget like an "i-Everything", says Reich, that will do or at least order everything for us, chopping out the middlemen. Millions of middlemen.

The solution? Universal basic income, apparently. Some boffins reckon everyone should be given a basic monthly income, more than the dole but not exactly a fantastic wage, so that we'll have enough to live on even when the machines make us redundant.

Okay, we need to inject some perspective into this dystopian panic, before everyone starts fantasising that the 21st-century West is one invention away from turning into that rubbish Will Smith movie "I, Robot".

Firstly, don't worry too much about job losses. Not yet. Only certain jobs are being automated.

Consider Britain. Researchers at LEK Consulting point out that in Britain between 2011 and 2016, 3.6m jobs were created and 1.1m were destroyed. That's a net increase of 2.5m jobs. More jobs are being created than are being handed over to the machines.

And not all of those 1.1m jobs were lost to automation. Around half of them were. This includes cashiers, whose number fell by 16% between 2011 and 2016; and typists, down 34%; and traffic

wardens, down 59%. (That's one plus of automation already: fewer snotty traffic jobsworths on our streets.)

There's a similar pattern across the West. Yes, some jobs are being automated, but not loads. It tends to be the rather dull, manual jobs that most of us have done at some point, and hated, that are being robotised. "Social, creative and complex jobs are harder to automate", one expert says.

So perhaps automation won't just bring about a "jobs apocalypse" but will free people to do more interesting work. We'll always need nurses, carers, teachers, inventors, explorers, artists, models, lifeguards, chefs and the like – I refuse to believe a machine will ever be capable of rustling up anything like the sesame seed-covered venison puffs I ate in a posh Chinese restaurant recently.

Humans will have to kill the deer, season it, taste it. Then, if they can get a robot to bring it to my table, I don't care.

The human eye, the human touch, the human voice, human knowledge, even human love – the workplace will always need these things. Hell, someone will have to turn the machines on! And clean them. Oil them. We sentient beings aren't going anywhere.

As to universal basic income: I think this is an awful idea. It would make welfare queens of us all. It would reduce us to things to be looked after,

probably by the state, rather than allowing us to be productive, creative and autonomous.

Some people have clearly not thought through the consequences of giving everyone a monthly income. It would mean people don't have to strive, take risks, search for work, search for fulfilment. It would chip away at social solidarity too: after all, you're not likely to turn to friends or neighbours for opportunities or advice if you know the faceless state is going to top up your bank balance every month.

If UBI were rolled out, it would zap both individual initiative, through extracting the struggle from life, and social bonds, by inviting us to rely more on officialdom than on each other.

That's far more dystopian than a world of machines: it would be a world in which *we* became machines, fed, watered and looked after by bureaucrats or caring corporations. No thanks. Let us work. Let us live. **❶**

**RESEARCHERS AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD RECKON 47%
OF JOBS IN THE US
COULD BE AUTOMATED
"RELATIVELY SOON"**



ANDREA MORELLO

ANDREA MORELLO TELLS US WHY WE ARE ON THE BRINK OF A QUANTUM REVOLUTION.
BY NATHAN HARMOND

THE computer you have on your desk is limited by the amount of energy it takes to perform one operation. By 2040, according to a recent report, we will not have the capability to power all of the machines around the globe. This is why people like Andrea Morello are turning to quantum computing and the strange ability of a subatomic particle to exist in more than one state at any time.

Can you explain quantum computing in 30 seconds?

Quantum computing is the use of quantum systems, usually like electrons and nuclei to encode information in such a way that you make use of quantum superposition and quantum entanglement to have access to a much larger computation of space so you can run your computation and algorithms in a different way. The important thing about quantum computing is that it is not a computer that runs faster - it's probably slower than a mobile phone. It's a computer on which you can write a different program that would not run on a normal computer. And it is that different program that allows you to arrive at the result in an exponentially smaller number of steps. The clock speed of a quantum computer is not particularly fast. Sometimes it is, but usually it isn't. But it's a different program you're allowed to write on a quantum system that you simply cannot write on a classical computer system.

How can something be and not be at the same time?

It's actually completely logical. One of the things that happens to you when you work on quantum mechanics for 20 years is that classical mechanics stops making sense to you. I'll give you an example. The thing I love about quantum mechanics is how it accounts for symmetries. Take a hydrogen molecule. A hydrogen molecule is two hydrogen atoms bound together, right? So there's two protons and two electrons. Now imagine you remove one electron, so you've got two protons and one electron. The electron could all be around this proton or be all around that proton. How does it choose?

It just goes back and forth?

Yes. It's actually spread out in both places at the same time. It's actually the most logical answer when you think about it.

What are three facts about quantum physics that will blow minds at a dinner party?

I'm a low temperature physicist by formation, so I like doing

things at really low temperatures. One of the coolest things is that helium never solidifies, even at absolute zero. It liquifies, but it never gets solid unless you put a massive amount of pressure on it. But at atmospheric pressure it doesn't solidify because of the quantum uncertainty principle. The forces that would make helium atoms crystallise into a solid are so weak that the quantum fluctuations coming from the Heisenberg uncertainty principle are enough to melt a solid. That's cool. (Laughs) But there's still the quantum uncertainty. The uncertainty principle tells you that you cannot know with perfect precision the position and the velocity of a particle. So, if something was standing perfectly still you would know that the velocity is exactly zero. Then it means you cannot know its position at all. So it must be everywhere.

That is mind-blowing.

Number two... let's see. Well you can do quantum teleportation.

This has been shown. I have a video that explains how it's done, so you can decide. And you can do quantum steering, so you can have two particles that are entangled at some point - they take on a state where they lose their own individual properties, they only exist in relation to each other - and you can separate them and you can do something to one particle and it affects the other particle which could be on the other side of the universe.

That is a pickup line.

Number three, let's see, another cool thing about quantum mechanics...

Okay, if you had 300 quantum bits fully entangled with each other so they all interact and you can create this quantum state where all of these quantum bits lose their individuality and they only exist in relation to each other - if you wanted to describe the quantum state of 300 quantum bits, you would need as many numbers as there are particles in the universe.

On a more practical level - and it's actually going to become relevant probably this year - if you have 48 quantum bits, just 48, just writing down the quantum state of 48 bits would take all of the RAM in all the computers in the world. So that means if you get 50, you've already done something you can't do on a classical computing system. People are working on it right now, it may be that in 2017, people will make a 50 qubit computer. People are trying very hard to get that.

So why is quantum computing significant?

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**IT'S NOT JUST A
FASTER COMPUTER,
IT'S LIKE THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
A CAR AND A JET
PLANE**
,

Quantum computing is probably one of the most potentially transformational technologies in the twenty-first century. So it's fascinating from a science point of view. But really it is a computer that can do calculations that cannot be done in other ways. It's not just a faster computer, it's like the difference between a car and a jet plane. A jet plane is not a faster car. Yes, it's faster than a car but that's not the point. A jet plane can take you over the ocean. A car cannot

What are some of the applications?

It's very early days, but some of the applications are chemistry, molecular design, drug design, material design, optimisation problems, complex data analysis, searching databases... That's just the start of it.

Is there potential for this being used by governments or terrorist group hackers?

Well, yes, that's one answer. But isn't everything? This stuff is really, really complicated to use. Of all the things that could be used for a bad purpose, this is not one of the more user-friendly things. Mind you, I often think – and I haven't found the answer – is there anything that was not invented for evil in the first place? I don't know that there is.

Well, evil is a good motivation...

Yeah, I mean normal computers as you know them were invented and built for simulating the hydrogen bomb, right? That's what the first computer was for. Hydrogen bombs have been made, though they haven't been blown up on anyone's head so far, so that's great. Congratulations, humanity.

Will quantum computing have any implications for consumer-level applications?

The most immediate consumer-level application is related to optimisation problems. For example, the travelling salesman problem. Say you're a DHL courier taking parcels to various places. What is the shortest path for you to drive? That is actually an incredibly hard calculation to do, so quantum computers can help with those sort of things. I have seen preliminary papers talking about video compression using quantum algorithms and things like that, but it's still very much in the preliminary phase.

Input and output of data in a quantum computer is not trivial. It's natural to think, "Oh a quantum computer is the kind of thing that can crunch a lot of data." Yes, it can, but there is a bottleneck at the input and output. So really, the quantum computer is the sort of thing where the data throughout is not huge, but the calculations you need to do to handle the data is monstrous for a classical computer. That's when a quantum computer can help.

Another interesting one is something that's not so much for day-to-day consumer purposes, but software debugging. If you are building, let's say, a jet plane, there's a huge amount of software going in there, there's a lot of control code. And if there's a bug and you're up in the air and you get a blue screen of death, that's not good. So there's a huge amount of money that goes into coding and debugging code. There are ideas of using quantum computers to find bugs in normal computer code, for example, which are huge applications. It's very, very

costly to find bugs in huge amounts of computer codes. So, yeah, there are a lot of things that people are interested in related to quantum computing.

Lastly, what are some of the ideas that you'd like to dispel about quantum computers?

People worry about the fact that quantum computers need to be kept at absolute zero. "Oh, how can I have it on my desk?" That's nonsense. I mean, most of the computations you do today don't happen in your computer, they happen somewhere in a server on the Cloud. Quantum computers would be one room of a big data server to which you're already connecting with your Microsoft, or Apple account. I mean, when you do a Google search, the search is not in your phone, the search is on the Google servers. If Google had a quantum computer to speed up the search, you wouldn't even know. You'd just see the search going faster. In that sense I think it's important to dispel the myth when people think, "Oh this thing needs to be cooled down, or be put in some weird environment," but that's not the problem. Already now, hardly any of the computation happens in your own device. Most of it happens in a server somewhere and you can put those big refrigerators anywhere.

I also think it's really important to send the message that there's more to quantum than just computing. In fact, I'm in the School of Electrical Engineering here at UNSW and I'm creating a small stream of quantum engineering courses. I think learning and understanding quantum technologies will become absolutely vital for engineers in the twenty-first century. And I think it's a disservice to go around saying, "Oh, the weird, spooky, counterintuitive world of quantum mechanics." That's bullshit. It looks that way because you've never been exposed to it, but once you

do get exposed to it, it makes more sense – and we now have ways to expose you to it that did not exist even ten years ago. Ten years ago people didn't know if this was possible at all, and now they just do it every day. That's why I create my videos – I want to debunk the idea that quantum is weird. It's weird because you aren't used to it. A bicycle is weird! If you've never ridden a bicycle and someone says, "Oh, jump on this bike and ride," you'd think, "What?! This thing is going to fall left or right!" And it will the first time you ride it, but then you get used to it and you think, "Oh it's just a bike. Let's go for a ride."

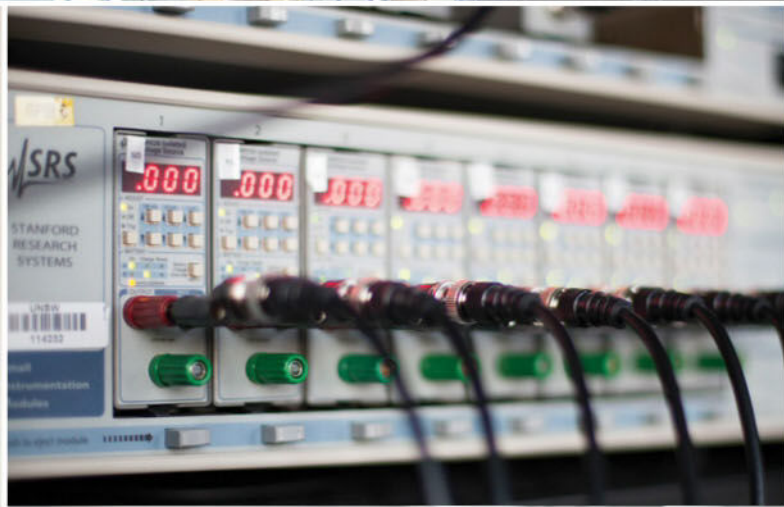
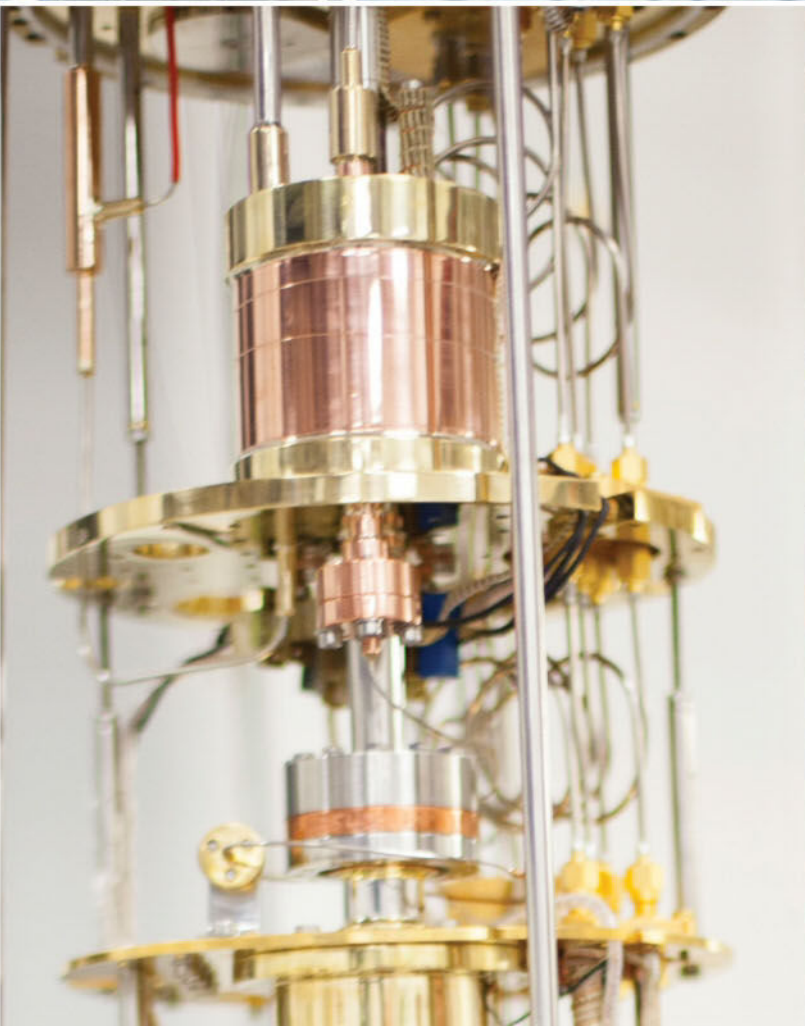
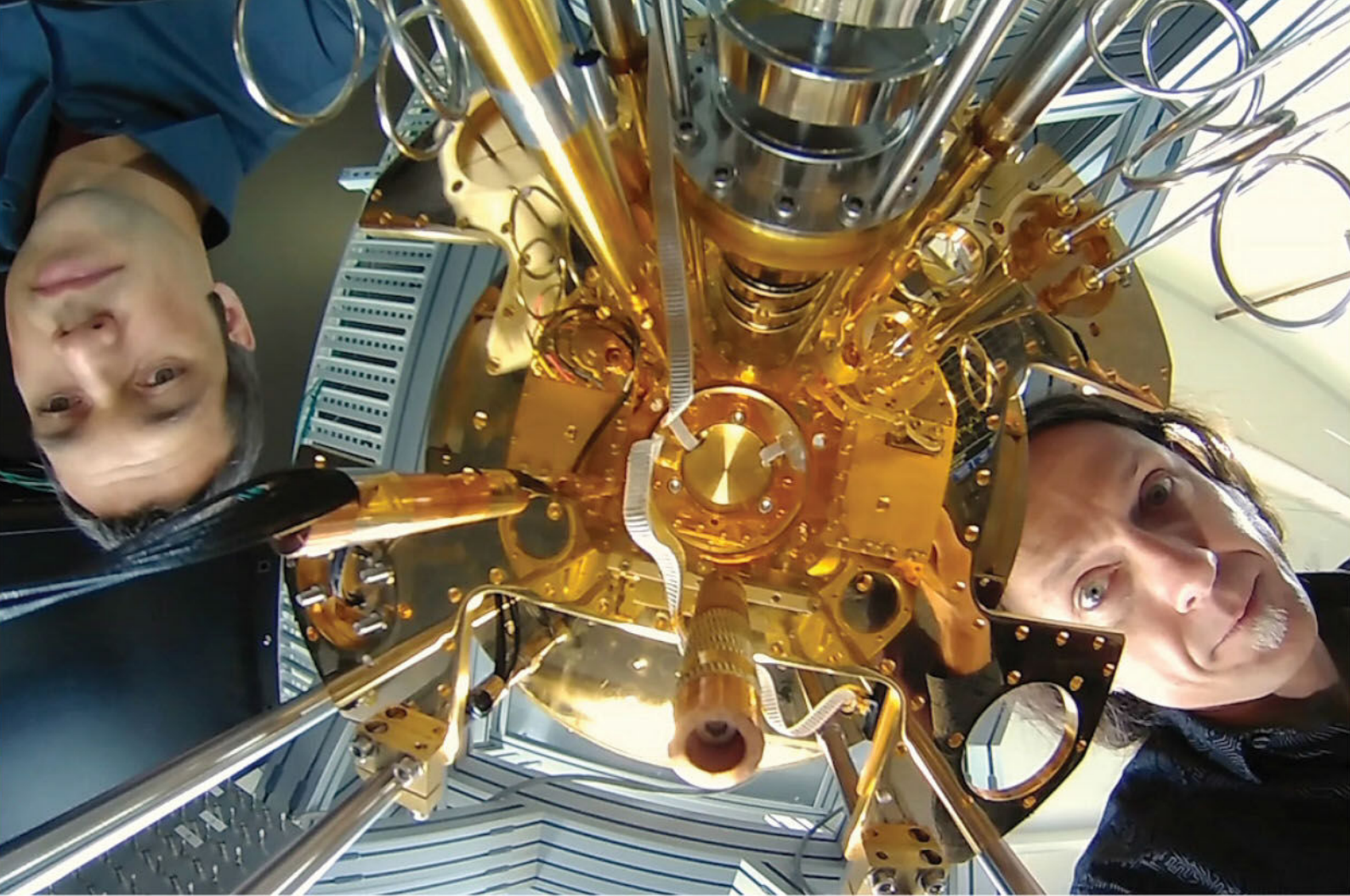
Do you have a morning routine?

Yes. First I do yoga, then I shower and shave and embellish myself, and then I'll sip my cup of tea on my gorgeous red-velvet lounge in my house with my lovely girlfriends. I have the good fortune of living with two girls who are my partners.

And how is it having two girlfriends?

It's really good. I don't find it harder than being in a couple arrangement but that's because I've been through the glitches of open relationships and multiple partners for many years. So the reason why the three of us are together now is because we are three people who share core values, which makes it viable. 

LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING QUANTUM TECHNOLOGIES WILL BECOME ABSOLUTELY VITAL FOR ENGINEERS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY





COLUMN

MAKING PORN HUMAN AGAIN

WHAT DO PORN PRODUCERS NEED TO DO TO MAKE WATCHING PEOPLE HAVING SEX INTERESTING AGAIN? **BY JESSE FINK**

AS an invaluable insight into the state of the nation, PornHub's annual "Year in Review" is starting to get right up there with the federal budget and the national census.

The world's biggest porn website crunched data from its 23 billion visits in 2016 and found Australia came in at number eight on the global list of porn-watching countries on a per capita basis.

For a country that likes to win anything it can, it was a poor result for Australia. Even those incorrigible fappers across the ditch in New Zealand managed to shade us.

Like the United States, 'lesbian' was the most-searched genre, while the 'MILF', 'Asian' and 'virtual reality' categories all increased in popularity.

What was most striking was the dramatic rise of cartoon and 'hentai' porn, as well a bizarre new hentai offshoot called *Overwatch*, based on the multiplayer shooter game of the same name by Blizzard Entertainment.

This torrent of filthy manga is most popular in East Asia but is rapidly gaining ground in Australia, where cartoon porn leaped 39 places to be the fifth most popular search, hentai rose 15 places to be tenth, and *Overwatch* debuted at seventh.

What the hell's going on? Are Australians becoming so bored with conventional porn that we feel compelled to watch animated figures bump uglies? Has viewing humans having sex really become that tedious?

Well, frankly, yes.

It's not difficult to tire of the same old scenarios: stepmother shags

husband's chronically horny son when they're at home alone; the MILF caught naked in the shower by the handsome house guest; the door-to-door salesman who knocks on the door when three or four desperate housewives are feeling frisky; the yoga class that descends into a full-blown orgy.

The big studios such as Brazzers, Bang Bros and Digital Playground try to mix things up a bit with increasingly unusual set-ups (the Brazzers House Sex Challenge is one memorable example) but a lot of it comes across as terribly seedy, soulless and even depraved.

What do porn producers need to do to make watching people having sex interesting again?

Perhaps the instant availability, free access to and complete ubiquity of porn on the internet means we've become utterly desensitised to even its more shocking elements. All those DPs, gangbangs, creampiees and glory holes have become passé.

What's truly groundbreaking, I believe, is showing more of what is the best part of sex – emotion – in the restrictive time frame of a typical porn scene. Having actors make love or at least appear to be making love instead of just brutalising each other's orifices for ten minutes.

That's what porn sites such as *PureMature.com* and Norwegian erotic photographer Petter Hegre's *Hegre.com* do very successfully.

It's not quite a paradigm shift or a return to the storylines and acting (for want of a better word) that was common in porn in the 1970s and '80s. Avatar porn is here to stay. But it's a welcome injection of tenderness in an industry that is losing sight of its humanity. **1**



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NAPOLEON OF NASHVILLE

WILLIAM WALKER WAS A SMALL MAN, BUT HE MORE THAN MADE UP FOR IT IN AMBITION.

BY RONNIE BOOGAARD

BEFORE the term was used to describe a tactic of deliberate windbagery designed to prevent or provoke action in a legislative assembly, a filibuster was historically a citizen who engaged in unsanctioned colonialist warfare against a foreign sovereign state. Derived from the Dutch word for “pirate,” but with top hats and monocles in place of eye patches and tricomes, the New World filibusters were particularly prevalent during the tumultuous mid-nineteenth century period preceding the American Civil War, operating to a backdrop of anti-abolitionist sentiment and the imperialistic dogma of Manifest Destiny. William Walker, the unlikely president of Nicaragua from 1856 to 1857, was the pre-eminent and perhaps loopyest of them all.

Born in Nashville to a wealthy family, Walker demonstrated his determined but restless spirit from a young age, graduating from university at 14 and earning first his medical license and then a law degree before the age of 25. After growing bored of the newspaper he founded in New Orleans, Walker joined the scores of other adventurers flocking west in the fevered grip of a gold rush—where conquering vast swathes of foreign territory to create a personal fiefdom might have seemed like a reasonable career move for an ambitious young man of the times. Texas and California had only recently been annexed from Mexico, and now Walker had his sights set on carving out a sizable slice of his own.

At all of 5'2", with wispy hair and a slender body, William Walker is described in almost Owen Meany-like terms, reportedly having possessed an oddly commanding oratorical presence in spite of his diminutive frame. Able to rally his ragtag band of only fifty-odd armed recruits, Walker would succeed in seizing the capital of La Paz with astonishing ease, declaring the entire Baja California peninsula an independent republic and himself its freshly appointed chief. Yet, an impetuous and ill-fated campaign to capture the neighboring state of Sonora—despite crippling cuts to his supply line

and a growing rate of desertion—would soon see wee Willy and his remaining men driven out of Mexico entirely, only to wind up facing charges for their contravention of the American Neutrality Act back at home.

No matter; the court's inability to convict the widely popular plunderer would only serve to grant Walker an added air of impunity, and Nicaragua—a land of considerable strategic interest as a cross-continental shipping route—remained equally ripe for the picking. Assembling a fresh personal army, Walker would next capitalise on the ongoing political unrest in the Central American nation by joining forces with its liberal faction to wrest control from the ruling conservative class. Alarmed by Walker's blatant expansionist agenda, Costa Rica—and later Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala in military alliance—would, in turn, respond with declarations of war on the American usurpers, prompting Nicaragua's puppet president to flee and thus provide Walker an opportunity to assume the position officially.

But Walker had erred in one ultimately fatal respect, having embroiled himself in a plot to strip control of the lucrative local shipping network from Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, the richest and most powerful man in America. Vanderbilt's intercession in the ongoing conflict would bring a swift end to Walker's reign, and the famed filibuster's remaining forays to reclaim his country would be plagued by maritime blockades, multiple arrests, and even a shipwreck. After one last failed assault, William Walker, former president of the Republic of Lower California and Nicaragua, would finally exhaust his good luck and be handed over to Honduran authorities by the British Royal Navy. He was executed at age 36.

In the following year, the Southern Confederacy would secede from the Union. If Walker had managed to hold onto his gains with just a fraction of greater political and military prudence, it's conceivable that their strategic and territorial value could well have tipped the delicate balance in the ensuing war to the South. ❶





COLUMN

BEAUTY AND THE BURKA

SHOULD WE BAN THE BURKA, OR IS A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE AND AN OPEN MIND A BETTER SOLUTION. **BY TARA SUTTON**

I'M having lunch of stuffed courgettes with four Syrian women in their empty flat on the scrubby outskirts of Amman. The women are refugees hoping to join their husbands who have made it to Sweden. They are cloaked in nylon fabric that covers all but their faces, one wears the niqab, with just her eyes showing. I ask them will they change the way they dress when they get to Sweden. "No this is us. This is how we are comfortable."

The Koran says they should be modest, but what constitutes "modesty" is open to wide interpretation. I worry that Iman's cheeky humour and Zeyneb's compassion will be lost in a way by some people's immediate response to their being covered. "People should get to know us through our actions, not our dress," says Iman.

I've spent the last fifteen years working as a journalist in the Middle East, covering the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the refugee crisis in Jordan. I've hiked in Oman, dined on a roast pigeon in Cairo and seen as much warmth and kindness as I have pain and violence. Still, the first question anyone I meet outside of the region always asks me is, "Do you have to wear a veil?"

This piece of fabric has a stranglehold on the Western imagination that veers towards the perverse. My short answer is no I don't have to wear a veil and outside of the fundamentalist regimes of Saudi Arabia and the IS-controlled areas – neither, by law, does anyone else. Women wear the gamut from jeans and t-shirts to full burka depending on their personal choice.

Back in Toronto, I'm gliding down an escalator in a popular clothing store with my six-year-old daughter – the massive wall in front of us is covered by a photo; a gorgeous

glossy-maned model in a skin tight dress that exposes her slender belly, her thighs scissor and the skirt just covers her underpants. Images like that used to make me think "Oh I should go on a diet," but now holding my daughter's hand I feel a kind of ache inside hoping the image doesn't sear into her brain too much. This is a fashion store, not an underwear store or an adult store, and this is what they are selling.

As I ping pong from east to west, and back again the contrasts get me thinking; if showing their bodies is liberating for women why would the same amount of exposed flesh on a man be considered ridiculous? Really the reason my female colleagues and I are told to "dress conservatively" in the Middle East – in other words cover our limbs – is only an issue because of just how un-conservative women's fashion has become. No one needs to tell my male colleagues to dress conservatively because they don't tend to have sleeveless shirts or knee-skimming trousers in their work wardrobes. They're already covered. The contradictions don't make any sense to me; the only constant is that whether it's too much or too little, it's always women's clothing that seems to need policing from the morality squad.

The ban-the-burka crowd has latched on the outward dress of women as a cure-all for the umbrella of oppression and a toxic fear of Muslims. That's a little like thinking that taking a bandage off of a wound means the wound is healed. Women all over the world have many battles still to fight like parity under the law, an end to child marriage, an end to genital mutilation and access to education. Telling women how to dress or not to dress does absolutely nothing to help. ❶



THE WOLF OF WATERSTREET

THE POWER OF NOW

THE DIGITAL WORLD IS GETTING SMALLER BY THE NEON MINUTE.
BY CHARLES WATERSTREET

THE massage therapist says to rub your stomach clockwise for maximum relief; things will soon pass. However, in the near future we won't be able to tell clockwise from a hole in the wall. Only a few antique watches will exist on the wrists of the rich and would-be rich. The time is digital, on iPhone. All notions of clock time, like Big Ben, will disappear, and future masseuses will have no idea which way the stomach's digestive system goes.

Just as I forgot left from right when I gave up blessing myself, the next generation will need to seek a new internal GPS to follow or get directions, the latter of which itself is already a bygone courtesy as travellers in the city rely on their phones.

We are all living in the power of now. It's claustrophobic. There's no room for the past, nor the future. No-one is planning, no-one is reminiscing. The world is chock-a-block with the need to be present, ever fucking present. Now is the time to get out.

No one is alone when CCTV is in every home, but no one knows it yet. It's playing in police stations in the sky. There are no secrets. There's no use for WikiLeaks, because everyone knows everyone's secrets.

Our minds are on constant display via VR sets such as Oculus Rift, which con users into thinking they are watching, when in fact they are being watched and recorded. This collated VR footage is stored by governments in silos so secret that even Julian Assange, still squatting in the old Ecuadorian embassy, does not know of the existence of this dark, dark, dark net.

To be human is to be in plain sight, and everybody knows everybody, so name dropping is a thing of the past. Gossip has disappeared. Imagination is no longer required, as the machines do your thinking. At least some of them might let you believe in your own cognition. Now we are ever-present, narcissism is mandatory but hopelessly romantic. The self is non-existent, as you are only part of the whole. The world is colourless and odourless, and population is our name. We are all joined at the hip, the head, and the feet. We are a Siamese World. No choice in friend requests, we are all friends on demand, serving shared lives on remand in invisible prisons, just as prisms capture all light. The Earth will be flat again. There will be no such thing as the power of no, only the power of now. **1**

05/17

**TOMB
RAIDER
ANDREW
LUCAS**











LARA CROFT: THE TOMB RAIDER

I'll never forget the first time I saw Lara Croft. Her earth-brown hair swung low in a roughly braided pony tail that ran down her back, below which lay her perfect, pixelated ass. Inside Croft Manor (Lara is no lowly commoner, she doesn't live in a house or even a mere mansion – she lives in a manor, so mind yours) she stood in one of the many unexplainable rooms that rich people always seem to have – a drawing room (for...drawing?) or conservatory (for conserving, of course). In all honesty, all I really remember was the roaring fire place and Lara's perfect Oxford English accent, instructing me in the same honeyed tones Nigella Lawson uses when she's describing cake batter. I gripped the video game controller with renewed vigour – as a boy, I was mesmerised.

In the pantheon of popular video games, *Tomb Raider* heroine Lara Croft's crop top exists in its own universe – a relic of nerd boy fantasy culture and an essential part of the character wearing it.

Since the genesis of *Tomb Raider* in 1996, the globe-trotting adventurer has starred in more than a dozen games, a pair of big-budget Hollywood blockbusters, a long-running comic-book series, an animated series, and even a set of amusement-park rides.

She's been portrayed by Camilla Luddington, Angelina Jolie, Minnie Driver and Keeley Hawes, all accomplished, beautiful and intelligent women in their own right.

And it all started with that video game back in the mid-nineties, which went on to sell over 58 million copies worldwide, making it one of the best-selling video game franchises, in the same ranks as *The Legend of Zelda*, *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell*, *Gran Turismo* and *Resident Evil*.

But you've never see her like this.

Lara Croft might've spent her career travelling the world for lost artefacts, but she stole our collective hearts the first moment we laid eyes on her. And we're sure her latest iteration will reignite your childhood fantasy all over again. ❶









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PHOTO ESSAY

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BENEATH ALL OF WHICH LIES A RICH CULTURAL
TAPESTRY STEEPED IN TRADITION.



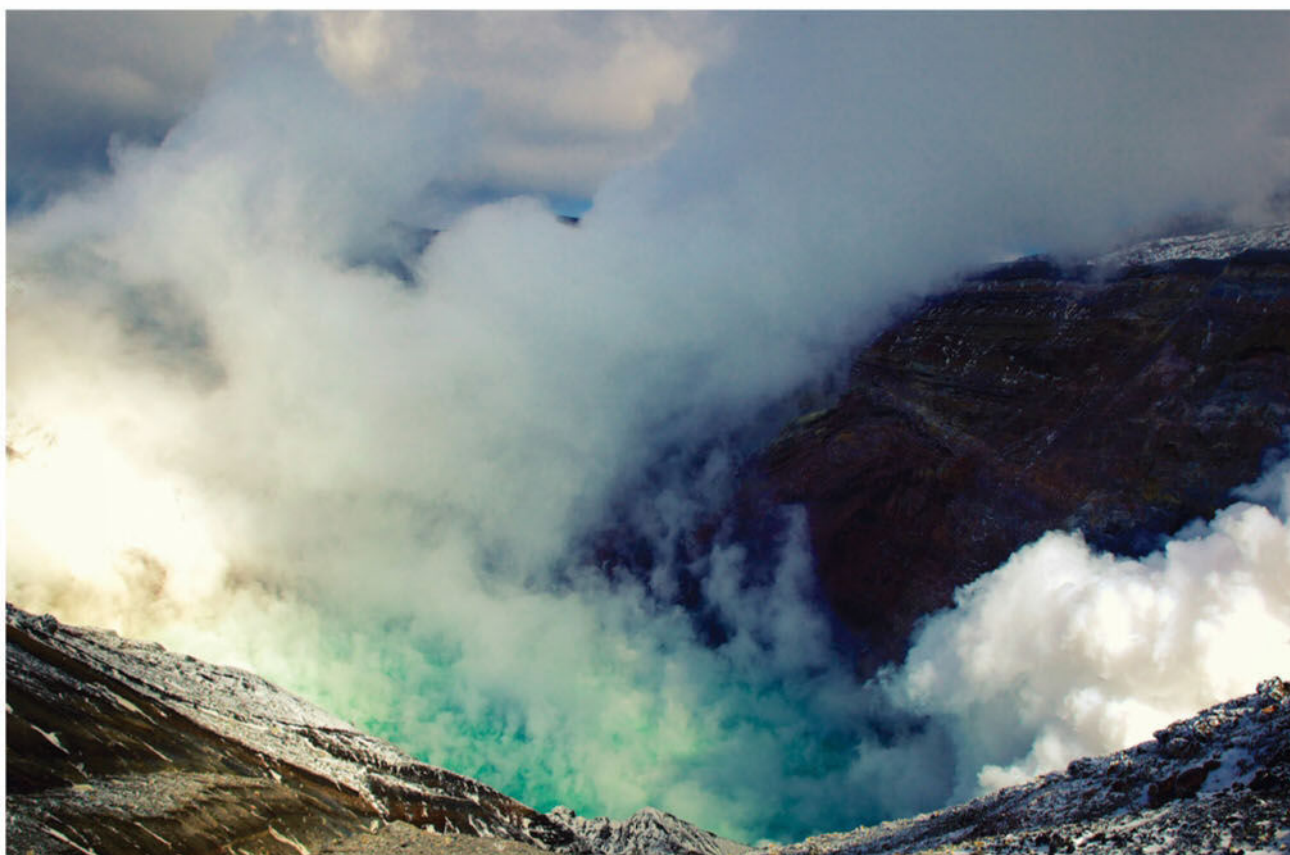
WILD WHITE PEAK, MADARAO KOGEN, LOOKING TO MT MYOKO



BRIGHT LIGHTS, DARK CITY, TAKAMATSU, SHIKOKU ISLAND



ASO-SAN, MOUNT ASO, KUMAMOTO PREFECTURE, KYUSHU









TRAIN TIME, NAGANO



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MORTAL KOI, RITSURIN GARDEN, TAKAMATSU, SHIKOKU ISLAND



FUNNY NEAR MISS



SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

MARTIN Luther King's dream is in tatters. His vision of a society in which people would be judged by their character rather than their skin colour has been pummelled. But it wasn't done by hood-wearing cross-burners or those toothless racists with red necks who haunt liberals' nightmares. No, it was liberals themselves who threw cold water on King's dream.

One of the weirdest things about the 21st century is that the people who make the loudest noise about being anti-racist are usually the most racist. Or at least they think racially, all the time, about bloody everything.

They lecture "white people" as if white people were one big indistinguishable blob. They drone on about "cultural appropriation" – the idea that cultures shouldn't mix, which I'm sure Hitler came up with before them. And they're breathing life back into segregation.

Last month, for the first time in its history, Harvard University held a racially segregated graduation ceremony. Alongside the official graduation shebang, there was a blacks only one, designed to celebrate "black excellence".

It doesn't matter how much PC blather the organisers spread over their separate black ceremony – the fact is they are resuscitating the segregationist mindset that civil-rights activists fought so hard against.

The separatist instinct is back. It might now be carried out in the name of boosting black people's self-esteem, where in the past it was about treating them as inferior, but the impact is the same: the races are ripped

apart; people are boxed by pigmentation.

The University of Connecticut set up a dorm for black males only. Other US universities have special classes for black students to make them feel more "comfortable" and confident enough to speak up. Patronising much?

Black Lives Matter has segregated some of its marches, telling whites to "take your place at the back." Then there's the cultural appropriation panic. Students have been slammed for wearing sombreros. Beyonce caused a storm by wearing a sari. Writers are getting it in the neck for penning tales about people of a different race to them. That is, for using their imaginations. This is nasty cultural separatism, and it rehabilitates the foul old idea that a white person can never understand a black person, and vice versa.

On some campuses, you can now get into trouble for saying the things King once said. At UCLA, the phrase "There is only one race: the human race" is treated as a "racial microaggression," on the basis that it refuses to recognise individuals as "racial/cultural beings".

This is mad. In the past, being a decent person, being anti-racist, was all about refusing to recognise individuals as "racial/cultural beings" and instead treating them as human beings. Now, thanks to the entrenchment of the bizarre, separatist, special-pleading politics of identity, we're expected to treat everyone as a racial creature. We must judge them by their colour, not their character. That sound you can hear is King spinning in his grave. **1**



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